NEW

What if...

Book of

Alternative History

Volume 2

What if...

... Napoleon had won at Trafalgar?

... the Titanic had not sunk?

... the RAF had lost the Battle of Britain?

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ALL ABOUT HISTORY

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FUTURE

VOLUME 2

Welcome to

What if...

Book of

Alternative History

Volume 2

Alternative history is a fascinating and increasingly popular topic that continues to ignite people's imaginations many years after the real-life events in question unfolded. In this brand-new volume of *What if... Book of Alternative History* we speak to experts to try to uncover how the world might look or events may have unfolded if some of history's key moments had turned out differently. Covering everything from politics and war to disasters, crises and more, read on to find out how the Second World War may have played out if the RAF had lost the Battle of Britain or if Stalingrad had fallen to the Nazis, how an Argentinian victory in the Falklands would have impacted Britain's standing in the world and its domestic politics, and how Nixon may have dealt with the Cuban Missile Crisis if he'd beaten JFK in the 1960 presidential election. We also explore how the modern world would look if 9/11 had been foiled, the impact a Napoleon victory at Trafalgar might have had and what might have been for Marilyn Monroe's life and career if she'd not died so young, as well as what could have happened if the French Revolution had spread to Britain or the Chernobyl disaster had not been contained. Turn the page to explore these fascinating alt-history scenarios and many more.

Contents

6 What if... 9/11 had been foiled?

10 What if... the Renaissance never happened?

14 What if... the Dunkirk evacuation had failed?

18 What if... Napoleon had won at Trafalgar?

22 What if... Lenin had been assassinated?

26 What if... Marilyn Monroe had lived?

30 What if... Pompey had defeated Julius Caesar?

34 What if... Rommel had won in North Africa?

38 What if... the Titanic had not sunk?

42 What if... Boudicca's revolution had succeeded?

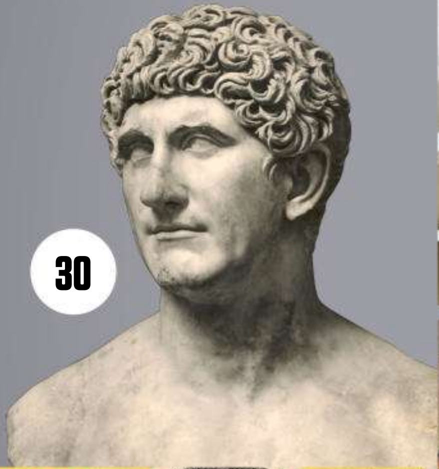
46 What if... the French Revolution had spread to Britain?

50 What if... the First Crusade had been defeated?

54 What if... Argentina had won the Falklands War?

58 What if... Operation Valkyrie had assassinated Hitler?

62 What if... Anne Boleyn had stayed in France?



John F. Kennedy
Vs
Richard Nixon
98

54
Falkland Islands
(Islas Malvinas)
(UK)
Stanley
allanes
de los Estados

66 What if… Japan had remained isolationist?

70 What if… Chernobyl had not been contained?

74 What if… the 1929 Wall Street Crash had been averted?

78 What if… the RAF lost the Battle of Britain?

82 What if… England and Spain had unified?

86 What if… women had ruled in Rome?

90 What if… Joan of Arc had not broken the Siege of Orleans?

94 What if… the Qing Dynasty had reformed sooner?

98 What if… Nixon had won the 1960 election?

102 What if… Stephen of Blois had died in the White Ship disaster?

106 What if… Stalingrad had fallen to the Nazis?

110 What if… England had remained a republic?

114 What if… the USSR had invented the atomic bomb first?

118 What if… the Chinese communists had lost?

122 What if… Frederick III of Germany had survived?

126 What if… Charles Lindbergh had run for president?

What if...

9/11 HAD BEEN FOILED?

It was a day that shook the world. But what would preventing the attack mean for the Global War on Terror?

INTERVIEW WITH

© S Jocelyne

Dr Sophie Joscelyne

Sophie is lecturer in the History of the United States and the World at UCL. She specialises in US foreign policy in the 20th and 21st centuries, and her work on US intellectuals and the concept of totalitarianism has appeared in *Modern Intellectual History.*

It was a brazen, deadly, terrorist attack like no other, evading US intelligence and defences to strike at an unsuspecting nation. One after the other, as the world watched in disbelief, hijacked aircraft stabbed into the World Trade Center; they and their innocent passengers reduced to mere tools of destruction by cold and calculated killers. That day would become the catalyst for the US to stage all-out war on terror. But had the plot been foiled, like so many others that never reach the headlines, would the US still have the justification, the mandate, and the will, to wage war on terrorists and the corrupt regimes that sheltered and supported them?

What would have been the possible scenario of the attack being stopped?

The American public experienced the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon as a profound shock. The attack seemed to come out of the blue. The 9/11 Commission Report and survivors' accounts similarly emphasised the ordinariness of the day – the clear blue sky and beautiful weather, people going to work – interrupted, in President George W Bush's words, by sudden "evil, despicable acts of terror". The shock was such that responses frequently referred to a sense of disbelief that the attacks had really occurred. How could it be that the government and American people were seemingly so painfully unprepared?

Within the government and security circles, the problem wasn't that officials were unaware of the threat of terrorism led or inspired by al-Qaeda, but rather that the threat appeared to be everywhere. In the spring and summer of 2001, in the words of CIA head George Tenet, "the system was blinking red". These threats were conveyed to Bush in the President's Daily Brief (PDB), and an article in the PDB from 6 August – just over a month before 9/11 – stands out. This article, 'Bin Ladin Determined to Strike in US', contained warnings of 'suspicious activity' in the US "consistent with preparations for hijackings... including recent surveillance of federal buildings in New York". The 6 August brief was a potential key point for action, when further investigation and co-ordination of intelligence could have uncovered and prevented the attacks.

What would possibly have changed in security and intelligence even if the attack was foiled?

9/11 had a dramatic effect on counter-terrorism efforts, especially on the surveillance of Americans. In the days after 9/11, Bush declared a state of national emergency, expanding government powers, before introducing the controversial Patriot Act on 26 October 2001. This enabled widespread surveillance of Americans – including wiretaps and search warrants – and was a landmark in the rise of the security and surveillance state. It is impossible to separate these changes in security from the concurrent rise in Islamophobia after 9/11. The vastly expanded government powers of surveillance and detention

Main image source: © Getty Images / Alamy

RIGHT Without 9/11, the war in Afghanistan may never have happened

THE PAST

1988

SETTING UP 'THE BASE'

During their war with the Russian invaders, Afghanistan had received financial and logistical help from the son of a wealthy Saudi businessman – Osama bin Laden. With the departure of the Soviets, bin Laden sets up al-Qaeda ('The Base') to continue the holy war of jihad. He had become increasingly hostile towards the US, opposing their military presence in Saudi Arabia and Somalia. By now al-Qaeda had raised considerable finances and planned to launch attacks on the West, indicating that attacks on the US were proper and necessary.

1993 – 2000

ESCALATION

On 26 February 1993, Ramzi Yousef, who had trained in one of bin Laden's terrorist camps, planted a truck bomb at the base of the Twin Towers in New York. The aim was to topple the towers, but it failed. However, six were killed and more than 1,000 injured. In 1998, US Embassies in Tanzania and Kenya were bombed, with over 200 killed and more than 4,000 injured. The evidence was traced directly back to bin Laden and his organisation and in 1999, bin Laden was placed on the FBI Ten Most Wanted Fugitives list. But his campaign was far from over, and on 12 October 2000, a small boat bomb exploded next to the USS Cole, killing 17 sailors. It is believed that, as early as 1996, in a meeting with bin Laden, his associate Khalid Sheikh Mohammed proposed using hijacked airliners to attack the United States.

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September 11th, 2001

THE WORLD IS CHANGED

On the morning of 11 September 2001, four domestic aircraft were hijacked soon after take-off. At 8.46am American Airlines flight 11 hit the North Tower. Then 17 minutes later, United Airlines 175 hit the South Tower. At 9.37am American Airlines flight 77 dives into the Pentagon. At 10.03am United Airlines flight 93 crashed in the Pennsylvania countryside. The passengers are believed to have tried to overpower the hijackers. At 9.59am the South Tower of the World Trade Center collapsed, and the North Tower 29 minutes later. Nearly 3,000 had perished in total, including 400 first responders rushing into the towers.

ABOVE Hundreds of firefighters and police were killed trying to save others

had a disproportionate impact on Middle Eastern Americans. During the official investigation into the attacks, US immigration officials conducted sweeping raids, targeting Middle Eastern American communities, and taking hundreds of Arab and Muslim immigrants into custody.

Their direct connection to 9/11 suggests that these short-term developments in security, surveillance, and detention may not have occurred had the attacks been foiled. However, a longer-term look at US security practices, before and after 9/11, suggests a more complicated picture. The Patriot Act and surveillance practices after 9/11 built on an existing surveillance infrastructure used to monitor and control those deemed to be security threats within America. The FBI's notorious COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence Program) began in 1956 and targeted left-wing radical groups, including the Black Panther Party. After 9/11, surveillance practices were extended and expanded following the immediate emergency period and during the Obama presidency. This willingness to curtail liberties in the interests of security suggests that increased and new forms of surveillance were likely to have occurred even if the 9/11 attacks had been foiled.

How might the dynamic of US foreign policy have been affected?

9/11 was a watershed moment in US history. It prompted a dramatic re-orienting of US foreign policy objectives with countering terrorism moving from the fringes to centre stage. In his address on 20 September 2001, Bush committed the US to an apparently endless and geographically boundless new war, with the complete eradication of global terrorism as its stated goal. This set US foreign policy up to fail.

Without 9/11, would the United States have attempted – would it even have been able to attempt – regime change in the Middle East? These speculations do not account for the dynamics of US foreign policy already in place before 9/11 – especially the triumphalist narrative that the US had won the Cold War not just through its military might, but the superiority of US ideas. Many figures in the Bush administration believed that the US had the power to reshape the world in its interests – to shape reality through its actions, to paraphrase an unnamed White House official in 2004. The dynamics of interventionism, a commitment to democracy promotion through regime change, and a fateful overconfidence were features of US foreign policy separate from the transformations wrought by 9/11.

If 9/11 had been foiled, would it simply have delayed another major terror attack?

It is highly likely that had 9/11 been prevented, another major terror attack would have been inevitable. Authorities had foiled a terror attack linked to al-Qaeda at the end of 1999. Although this plan failed, al-Qaeda's history of attacks on American targets outside the US demonstrated the likelihood of future strikes. The list of terrorist attacks in the 1990s is suggestive of what such an attack might have looked like, including the detonation of a truck bomb underneath the World Trade Center in 1993; the bombing of an American airbase in Saudi Arabia in 1996; and bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. In 2000, al-Qaeda operatives bombed the USS Cole in a suicide attack. All these attacks were deadly, resulting in hundreds of fatalities, and thousands more injured.

Osama bin Laden was motivated by an extremist ideology which committed him to a perpetual struggle to bring down the West and Western-allied governments in the Middle East. Contrary to Bush's statement that the United States was hit simply because it was "the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world", bin Laden firmly linked the attacks to US foreign policy in the Middle East - notably its support for Israel, and the presence of US troops in Saudi Arabia. The intractability of conflicts in the Middle East and US entanglement in the region made future attacks all but inevitable.

Would there have been a 'War on Terror' anyway with the US just finding another reason to pursue it?

Without 9/11, there would not have been a 'War on Terror' as we know it. This does not mean, however, that the US would not have continued to intervene in the Middle East. Especially in the case of Iraq, there is good reason to believe that the US would have sought to topple Saddam Hussein's regime anyway. Hawkish foreign policy experts like Paul Wolfowitz, known as the 'neoconservatives' in the Bush administration, had been pushing for regime change in Iraq since at least the early 1990s. Other factors, including US oil interests in the Middle East; the sense that the US had unfinished business in Iraq after leaving Saddam in power in 1991; and the doctrine of democracy promotion all contributed to the likelihood of US intervention in Iraq. Without 9/11 though, it is hard to see how Bush would have convinced the American public of the need for an invasion. The case for war rested on the argument that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction (WMD), but this case was incomplete without the context of dramatically heightened fears of international terrorism. It was on this combined threat - Saddam's WMD programme and his support for terrorism (both claims built on shaky or non-existent evidence) - that Bush built the case for war. The history of US covert intervention in the Middle East (such as the CIA-backed coup in Iran in 1953) suggests other ways in which the United States may have sought to advance its interests without a full-scale invasion.

Would the US have gone after the suspected plotters anyway and what would it have meant for public opinion of the Middle East and Iraq?

Had the government foiled 9/11 they would have gone after the suspected plotters, but through covert means, rather than a full-scale invasion. Without 9/11, the Bush administration would have been unable to make the case for war to the American public and an international audience. One of the most significant impacts that Bush's response to 9/11 had on public opinion was the conflation of Saddam Hussein's secular regime in Iraq with the theocratic, stateless movement al-Qaeda. Despite a lack of evidence, Bush frequently claimed that Saddam had close ties to al-Qaeda, and most Americans believed that Saddam was behind the terrorist attacks. This claim was part of a broader worldview, which linked Saddam's secular nationalism and al-Qaeda's Islamic fundamentalism as examples of so-called 'Islamofascism'. This conflation provided a powerful rationale for US foreign policy which explicitly drew on the Cold War division of the world into spheres of democracy and totalitarianism. Without 9/11, and without the imposition of this simplifying ideological framework, a clearer and more complex picture of the Middle East could have been made visible to the American public - and it would have been much harder to build the case for invading Iraq.

BELOW
If there was no 9/11, women would never have tasted freedom from the Taliban, although sadly this has now ended

THE POSSIBILITY

2001 – PRESENT

NO CHANGE

It is unlikely that foiling 9/11 would have eradicated any threat of terrorism - it may have even made bin Laden and his terror network more determined to carry out a major terrorist attack. His obsession with attacking the West and the promotion of his own version of Islamic rhetoric would not have diminished, making the intelligence and security services of the West, and the US in particular, equally as determined to destroy his network. The intractability of conflicts in the Middle East, and US entanglement in the region, made future strikes all but inevitable.

2001 – PRESENT

EYES EVERYWHERE

Despite the ongoing problems that the US faced with terrorist attacks around the world, without 9/11 President George Bush would have less motivation to turn up the rhetoric for a 'War On Terror'. US foreign policy could look dramatically different without the revival of the simplistic but powerful dichotomies that gained currency after 9/11 and echoed the Cold War: Good v Evil, Western Democracy v 'Islamofascism'. However, the knowledge that such an attack could be planned and even partially implemented would have given cause for surveillance and intelligence-gathering techniques, in which the privacy and even rights of the individual are sacrificed in the name of the greater, safer, good.

2001-21

LEFT FROZEN IN TIME

It is doubtful the US would have left Saddam Hussein alone. If 9/11 had been prevented, however, the US would not have invaded Afghanistan in 2001. Bin Laden, sheltered by the Taliban regime, would remain a US target. But all-out war and regime change would be difficult to sell to the American people. Lives lost would instead be saved. But without the US invasion and protracted war, the extreme and archaic Islamic rule of the Taliban would persist, and women and girls would never have tasted the freedoms of expression and education they deserve.

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What if...

THE RENAISSANCE NEVER HAPPENED?

Between the 14th and 17th century, a new interest in classicism changed Western art forever

INTERVIEW WITH

© Richard Lloyd

Richard Lloyd

Richard Lloyd is a writer and researcher with an interest in the Italian Renaissance, particularly in relation to the city of Florence. He has studied at Winchester College, the British Institute in Florence and Oxford University.

What is the Renaissance?

Literally, Renaissance means 'Rebirth', but it is the revival of the styles of Roman and Greek (Classical) architecture and sculpture, and of interest in their mythological culture of gods and goddesses and stories of people affected by them. Rome's influence over Italy was reduced by the Gothic devastation of the city in the sixth century. By the ninth century the Romanesque style of architecture began to spread around Italy, not reviving classical Roman styles but using rounded arches, not pointed Gothic ones. By the 15th century the Renaissance revival of Classical styles began. Writer John Fowles stated: "In essence the Renaissance was simply the green end to one of civilization's hardest winters. It was an end to chains, bounds, frontiers. Its device was the only device: what is, is good."

Can you tell us about Florence's role in the Renaissance?

Florence was the city in Italy that had the most powerful role in the Renaissance. It became prosperous from its development of dyes to colour wool and silk, and the manufacture of colourful clothing. This funded many families, of which several developed banks to finance their international trade. The Medici family was one of the wealthiest and became rulers of the city. They recruited Greek scholars to the university, and to tutor their friends, and many Florentines paid artists to revive Classical styles and subjects. Several families provided lavish funding for large amounts of art and architecture, leading to Florence being the centre of the development of art for several centuries and the home of the world's most famous artists.

What, in your opinion, are some of the key works of the Renaissance?

Filippo Brunelleschi was the architect who was most influential in reviving the Classical style. The churches that he designed, San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito, the chapel of the Pazzi at the church of Santa Croce, and the hospital of the Innocenti, were all built with Classical columns and Corinthian and Ionic capitals. His most famous piece of architecture is the dome of the cathedral of Florence, with a Classical lantern and arcades, called the upper tribunes, supporting the drum beneath the dome.

Another famous architect is Leon Battista Alberti, whose attractive Palazzo Rucellai has Classical capitals on all the pilasters on its facade. Donatello's sculptures, in particular, his bronze *David*, and Antonio del Pollaiuolo's paintings and sculptures of Hercules, are also key works of the Renaissance. Giambologna is another sculptor, known for his *Fountain of Neptune*, *Rape of the Sabines*, and bronze *Mercury*. Botticelli's paintings for the Medici family with Classical themes or subjects – *Primavera*, *The Birth Of Venus*, and *Pallas And The*

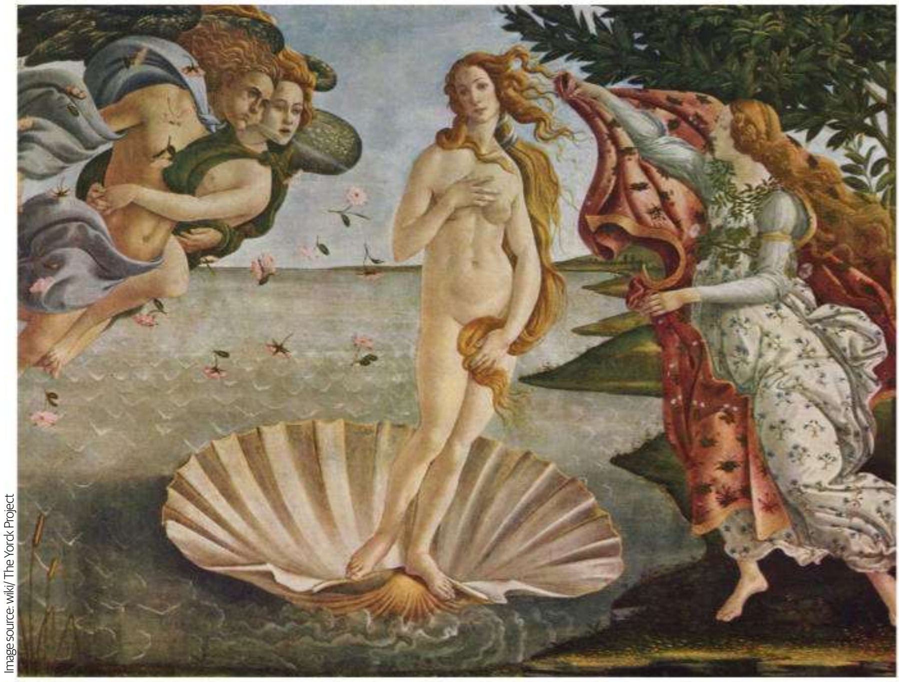


Image source: wiki/ The Yorck Project

Main image source: © Getty Images

RIGHT
Botticelli's *The Birth Of Venus*, 1480s

VACANCY

THE PAST

12th – 18th CENTURY

WHO WERE THE MEDICIS?

If one family can be held responsible for the Renaissance it is the Medicis, who rose to prominence in the 12th century after emigrating from the village of Caffagiolo to Florence. Using their influence in banking and commerce, they soon became one of the most prominent ruling families in Florence and later Tuscany. During the family's centuries of dominance, many of its sons and daughters would become of historical importance. Some of the most notable include Catherine De Medici (who became the wife of Henry II of France and would play a key role in the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572) along with four popes: Leo X, Clement VII, Pius IV and Leo XI. During the Renaissance, the Medicis' wealth allowed them to function as patrons to numerous artists and helped create works such as the Sistine Chapel, the Duomo of Florence and St Peter's Basilica. Crucially, the Medici family's skill at diplomacy created a peaceful environment in which art was able to flourish. The family commissioned Michelangelo to build the famous Medici tombs, which took nearly 15 years to complete. The famous sculptor also lived in the palace of Lorenzo de' Medici as a young man, studying under the guidance of Donatello.

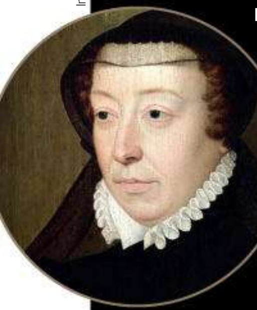


Image source: wiki/ Musée Carnavalet

1501

MICHELANGELO AND DAVID

Considered the greatest artist of his time, Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni has had an unparalleled effect on the history of Western art. Despite being known mainly as a sculptor, his most famous work is perhaps the paintings on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. However, his *David* is equally one of his most well-known works. In the 15th century a large stone block was brought to Florence from Carrara in Tuscany. For years, the Opera del Duomo sought someone to conquer the block but many artists, including Agostino di Duccio and Antonio Rossellino, tried and failed to sculpt it. In 1501, Michelangelo was officially commissioned and spent three years working on the statue.

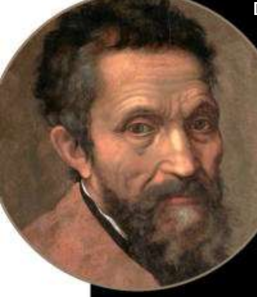
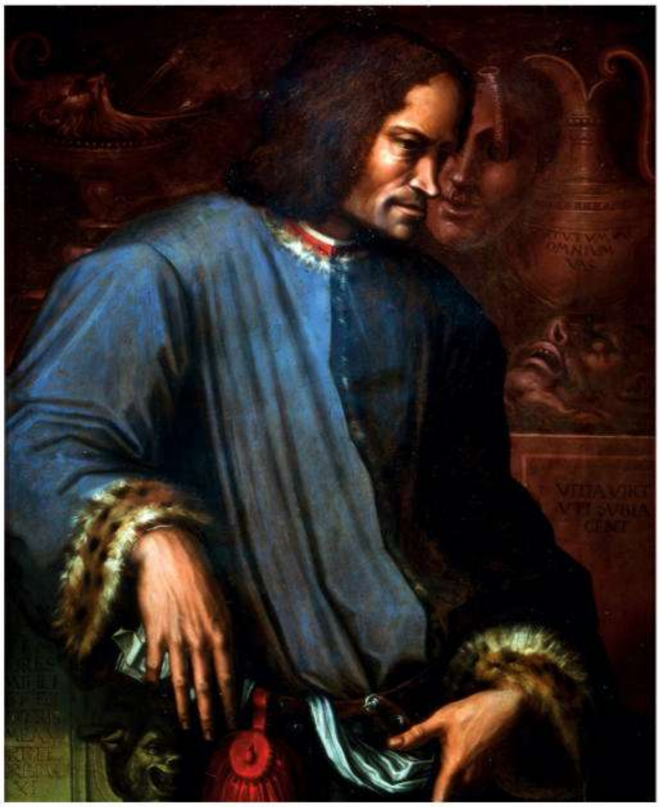


Image source: wiki/ Metropolitan Museum of Art, online collection (The Met object ID 436771)

Centaur – are similarly well-regarded. Perhaps the most celebrated are the works of Michelangelo. His most famous paintings are in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican in Rome, but his most famous sculpture, *David*, is in Florence.

How much did the Italian Renaissance rely on surviving Classical works?
Architects were influenced by the remains of ancient temples and triumphal arches in the forum of Rome. Brunelleschi went there to study them, as did Alberti, who wrote an influential book on Classical architecture. Sculptors were influenced by statues of Roman emperors and by the statue of Laocoon, which was discovered in Rome in 1506 and copied by Baccio Bandinelli. Michelangelo's *David* was inspired by sculptures of Hercules and his bust of Brutus by the third century bust of Emperor Caracalla. Hardly any Classical paintings survived but many artists put Classical architecture into their paintings. This was especially true of Domenico Ghirlandaio in his frescoes of scenes of the lives of the Virgin Mary and St John the Baptist in the Tornabuoni family's chapel in the church of Santa Maria Novella.

Can you tell us something of the other important families in Florence?
While the Medici are the most famous family of Florence, because they became the grand dukes of Tuscany, several other families sponsored significant amounts of art. The Peruzzi and Bardi families both had international banking businesses and developed substantial areas of buildings in the 13th century, in the Piazza de' Peruzzi and the Via de' Bardi. Both of these families commissioned Giotto, Florence's most famous early Renaissance painter, to fresco their chapels in the Franciscan church of Santa Croce in the early 14th century. The Peruzzi chapel has scenes of the lives of St John the Baptist and St John the Evangelist, and the Bardi chapel has scenes of the life of St Francis. The Brancacci family sponsored the frescoes in their chapel in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine, painted by Masolino and Masaccio in 1424-7. These were so admired by future Florentine artists that many went there to copy their designs. The Rucellai family employed the architect Alberti to design their handsome Classical-style palazzo and their grand loggia in the piazza in front of it. Alberti also designed a tomb for Giovanni Rucellai in the chapel in the church of San Pancrazio, based on the Holy Sepulchre of Christ in Jerusalem but decorated with Classical pilasters. The Rucellai family also commissioned Alberti to design the famous facade of the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella. The Strozzi family built two palazzi in Florence. The major one, called the Palazzo Strozzi, was one of the grandest Renaissance buildings, built from 1489 to designs by Benedetto da Maiano and Simone del Pollaiuolo. As early as 1350, the banker Tommaso Strozzi, whose uncle Pietro was prior of the monastery at Santa Maria Novella, commissioned a couple of brothers from the Cione family to fresco a chapel in Santa Maria Novella, with illustrations of the Last Judgement derived from Dante's imagination in his *Divine Comedy*. At the end of the 15th century, Filippo Strozzi commissioned Filippino Lippi to fresco another chapel in Santa Maria Novella with scenes of the lives of St John the Evangelist and St Philip. The Corsini family began to build a massive Baroque-style palazzo on the bank of the River Arno in 1656. They also built a chapel in



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ABOVE
Lorenzo de' Medici, one of the key patrons during the Renaissance

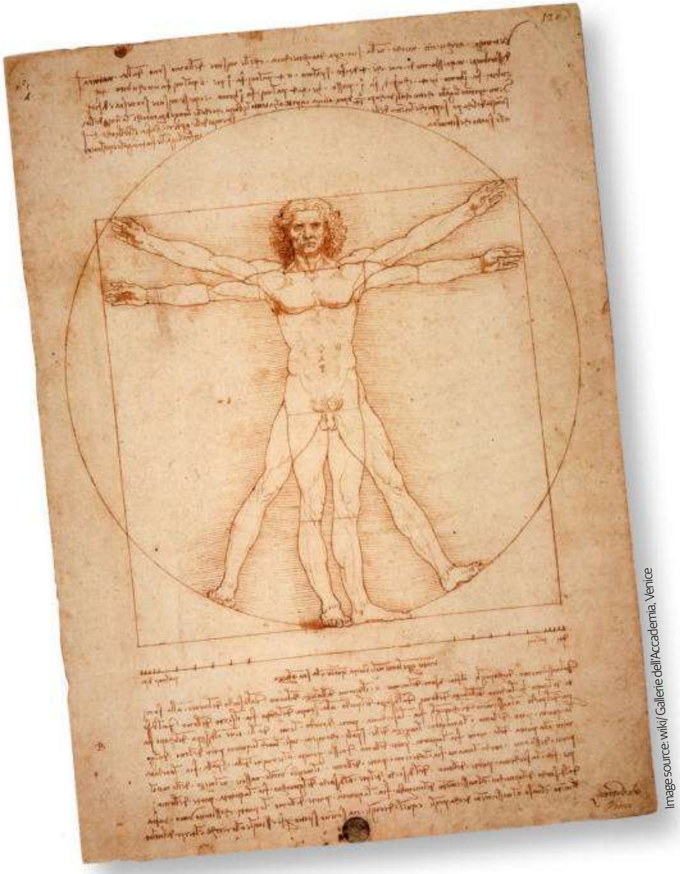
> "Brunelleschi's rediscovery of perspective was followed by many Renaissance artists"

the church of Santa Maria del Carmine to celebrate their ancestor Bishop Andrea Corsini, who had been canonised as a saint. It had dramatic relief panel sculptures made by Giovanni Battista Foggini, Florence's best Baroque sculptor.

Why was the introduction of perspective so important?
Roman artists understood perspective and used it in their frescoes on the buildings of Pompeii and Herculaneum, but these were not discovered until the volcanic lava of Mount Vesuvius was removed in the 19th century. Neither Byzantine nor Gothic artists used it, so their paintings and mosaics are mainly flat and do not have landscapes or buildings in their backgrounds. The rediscovery of perspective by Filippo Brunelleschi was followed by many Renaissance artists. These included Donatello in one of his relief sculptures, of St George slaying the Dragon, and especially by Masaccio, in the urban backgrounds of his frescoes in the Brancacci Chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine, and in the chapel background of his Holy Trinity fresco in Santa Maria Novella. Masaccio's style was so much admired by Florentine artists that his accurate use of perspective was followed by many of them.

How important to art history is the Renaissance?
The strictly Classical styles of the Renaissance period were altered by the Mannerist and then Baroque styles, which included vigorous motion and dramatic lighting and colour into pictures, and decorative elements into architecture. But the Classical styles were revived in Neoclassical art and architecture in the 18th and 19th centuries in cities all around Europe. The greatest of all Italian Renaissance artists – Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael – are the most famous of all artists.

ABOVE
Brunelleschi's famous dome at the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Flore



BELOW
Leonardo Da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*, demonstrating the proportions of the human body

Image source: wiki/ Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

Were there any other similar artistic movements which could have taken its place?
Gothic art and architecture was very widely influential, but was displaced by Renaissance styles until the 19th century. Gothic paintings mainly had gilded backgrounds but did not have perspective – that was revived in the Renaissance by Brunelleschi and several others. Gothic architecture always has pointed arches and doesn't have the regularity of Classical designs

What could the effect on the history of art have been if there had been no Renaissance?
The Renaissance is one of the most interesting eras in the history of art, because of its revival of illustrations of Classical mythology, of elegant and carefully proportioned architecture, and of Greek sculptures of handsome naked men. Without it, many European cities would be much less attractive.

THE POSSIBILITY

12th – 16th CENTURY

GOTHIC ART

Evolving from Romanesque art, Gothic art wasn't named as such until the Renaissance and its renewed interest in Classical works. The style was named due to its perceived ugliness being attributed to the style invented by the Barbarian Gothic tribes who played a role in toppling the Roman Empire. As such, popular opinion regarding Gothic style was almost uniformly derogatory until the 19th century when a revival took place. If the Renaissance interest in Classical art forms and styles had not taken place, it is possible that the Gothic style could have continued uninterrupted – though doubtless it would have been replaced at some point, if not necessarily by Classicism.

18th CENTURY

THE BIRTH OF NEOCLASSICAL ART

The late 18th century saw further renewed interest in the ancient world, due partially to the relatively new science of archaeology. Professional illustrators documented discoveries, such as the ruins of Athens, in pamphlets. Eventually this obsession with Classicism would result in the Grand Tour, in which wealthy young men were encouraged to travel to Europe to gain knowledge of art, architecture and Classical culture. The Neoclassical movement built upon the Renaissance interest in proportion and simplicity, as opposed to the excess of medieval Gothic works. Without the Neoclassical emphasis on formal composition and historical subject matter, the history of Western art would've been very different.

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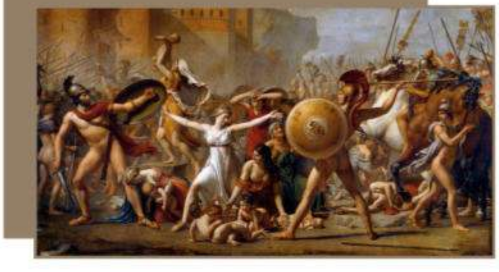

What if...

THE DUNKIRK EVACUATION HAD FAILED?

In 1940 a vast rescue operation miraculously saved the majority of Britain's army, but what would failure have meant in the war against the Nazis?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Getty Images

Joshua Levine

Joshua Levine practised as a barrister before becoming an actor and writer. He has written several books on the subject of the two World Wars and served as the historical consultant on the 2017 film *Dunkirk*.

Between 26 May and 4 June 1940, a vast operation took place to rescue thousands of British troops from northern France. The Germans' rapid advance through the difficult and hilly terrain of the Ardennes had outflanked the British forces. Realising that a continued attack would be hopeless, the British launched Operation Dynamo, a huge endeavour to rescue as many troops as possible. The improvised evacuation, involving hundreds of navy and civilian vessels, was nothing short of a miracle. It kept Britain in the war and paved the way for the eventual defeat of Nazi Germany. Yet the success of the operation was on a knife-edge – how might the future of both Britain and WWII have looked had it failed?

What happened leading up to the evacuation of troops at Dunkirk? Why was it necessary?

The British Expeditionary Force arrived in France at the beginning of the war and the expectation was that there would be a confrontation. The Germans, it was believed, would be attacking through Belgium and, initially, the British Expeditionary Force wasn't allowed to advance into Belgium – the Belgians were remaining neutral because they didn't want to provoke the Germans. When the German attack arrived, in May 1940, it came in Belgium as expected, and the British duly moved forward to the River Dyle, where the two sides met. What was expected was a standoff with two armies facing each other across a series of trenches, much like the previous war. But the Germans were simultaneously mounting another attack further south. They did not attack along the Maginot Line, a series of heavily fortified defences built along their border with France. Instead, the Germans launched a daring attack through the Ardennes, a hilly, forested area that was not considered ideal at all for tanks. The area was barely defended and the Germans moved quickly through it. By 20 May, German tanks had reached the French coast. After little more than a week, the Germans had almost surrounded the British Expeditionary Force.

Can you explain the plan for the Dunkirk evacuation?

Basically, there was no plan! It was never anticipated that the army would need rescuing. The evacuation was improvised by Admiral Bertram Ramsay from Dover Castle, where he could literally see across to the French coast. The initial idea was to bring soldiers back from Dunkirk harbour. Ships would be sent directly into the harbour but the Luftwaffe quickly put it out of action. And this is where improvisation reached its height. If you can't lift people from the harbour, what can you do? Well, there's the 10 miles of shallow beaches stretching from France into Belgium. In theory, people could be taken directly off the beaches, but the problem was that the bigger naval and transport ships couldn't get close enough – so initiative was needed. For example, the Royal Engineers used discarded lorries and drove them out into the water, where they were tethered together and a walkway built on top allowing them

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RIGHT Admiral Bertram Ramsay (left), who organised the evacuation, watches Allied aircraft over the Normandy coast in 1944

Main image sources: © Alamy, © Getty Images

THE PAST

1940

HITLER'S HALT ORDER

Just as his troops were ready to move onto the beaches at Dunkirk, Adolf Hitler gave the order for them to halt the advance and left the attack to the Luftwaffe. For years this order has generated controversy. It was suspected for a long time that it might have been given out a sense of mercy and that Hitler suspected a show of force would now push Britain into making peace. However, Hermann Goering insisted this Luftwaffe be given the honour of finishing off the British Army. Hitler relented and halted the movement of the Panzers outside Dunkirk. Partly this was due to tank losses and the worry this could leave the left flank of the advance vulnerable. This decision would give the British troops valuable time to stage the evacuation.

1912-40

FROM THE TITANIC TO DUNKIRK

One of the men who captained a 'little ship' during the evacuation of British troops at Dunkirk was Charles Lightoller, the surviving second officer of the Titanic, which had sunk in 1912. Lightoller survived the sinking when, as the ship plunged under water, he found himself trapped but was saved when a boiler explosion in the bowels of the ship released a blast of hot air that pushed him to the surface. He then stood on top of an upturned lifeboat with some other surviving passengers, constantly shifting their weight so as not to capsize the little boat, until they were rescued. Pictured here with his son, who also assisted in the evacuation, the 66-year-old Lightoller managed to rescue some 130 British soldiers from the beaches of Dunkirk in his 58ft private motor yacht, The Sundowner. Lightoller would live out the rest of his days running a small boatyard and constructing boats for the river police. In 1952 he would pass away of heart disease.

to be used as makeshift jetties. And a lot of smaller boats and ships were needed to lift people off the beaches, so plenty of boat owners around southern England found that their boats were suddenly whisked away. For me, the most impressive improvisation was by a man called Captain William Tennant, who was the senior naval officer ashore in Dunkirk. When he got there on 27 May he realised something had to be done to get people off in larger numbers, because significant numbers of soldiers were starting to arrive inside the Dunkirk perimeter. Captain Tennant spotted the large East Mole; this was a mile-long breakwater, it wasn't a jetty. Ships never came alongside it. But Tennant brought a huge ferry alongside and soldiers found ways to clamber on board. It worked brilliantly.

How integral were the 'little ships' to the evacuation?
There is an idea that ordinary people got in their private little motor boats and came over to Dunkirk, and to some small extent that did happen. A man called Charles Lightoller, who had been the senior surviving officer on board the Titanic, took his own little boat across. But for the most part these 'little ships' were requisitioned in a hurry by the Royal Navy and a lot of their owners thought they had been stolen. As a result, there were civil actions against the Navy for people who lost their boats that carried on for years afterwards! These little ships started arriving in large numbers on 30 May. However, it should be remembered that these ships were, for the most part, not taking people back to England but carrying them from the shore to the larger ships. Their primary role was to ferry people off the beaches.

Could the evacuation have failed?
There was every chance it could have failed. Churchill initially hoped that 30,000 soldiers would get away and in the end 338,000 made it off the beaches. There were an incredible number of things which allowed people to escape. Firstly, there was the successful defence of the roads to Dunkirk and then the defence of the perimeter around Dunkirk by both British and French troops – many of whom were sacrificing themselves for the greater good. Then there was the generally calm sea and the frequent cloud cover. These were strokes of luck, as was the infamous 'Halt Order' that stopped German tanks in their tracks for several crucial days. A little-known scientific process known as 'degaussing' kept hundreds of ships safe from German magnetic mines. You've got the efforts of the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy, and the work of the little ships. People often forget the work being done by the Royal Air Force. All of these things came together. They're all immensely important and without one or more of them it could all have been different.

If Dunkirk had failed what could the effect on the war have been?
Britain would have almost certainly been forced to seek terms with Germany. Lord Halifax was keen to pursue some kind of negotiation. If Britain had made peace, it would have become – as Churchill said at the time – a slave state. It would

BELOW
Stranded troops on the beaches at Dunkirk during the evacuation in 1940

SOUTHERN
RAI
RETURN TO HENRY TELFER
RETURN TO HENRY TELFER

© Getty Images

have meant that the war as we know it wouldn't have taken place. Without Britain to preserve freedom and the rule of law then the norms of Nazi Germany would simply have bled right across Europe. Would America still have entered the war? Where would the second front have come from without Britain as a base to get back into Europe? Would Europe have ever been liberated? In America there's a tendency to think of Dunkirk as a sort of parochial little British story that took place before the Americans and the Russians got involved and the real war started. And that's not right. The influence of Dunkirk on the world in which we live is beyond imagination.

What could the failure of the evacuation have meant to Britain?
The evacuation gave rise to an idea known as 'Dunkirk Spirit' which is still bandied about constantly. But in the summer of 1940 it was real and it was organic. The soldiers came home and most were embarrassed. They thought of themselves as the remnants of a battered army, so they were amazed to be treated as heroes by civilians. People were buying them drinks in pubs and slapping them on the back. Families were happy that their sons, brothers and husbands had come home but also they were just relieved that Britain hadn't lost the war. That relief gave rise to a spontaneous release of emotion. Mass Observation reports from the time said that this sudden release of feeling after Dunkirk would rouse the nation. In the immediate aftermath of the evacuation, politicians in the Cabinet started talking about war aims and what they wanted Britain to be like after the war. *The Times* published an editorial saying British life should no longer be based on privilege but on democracy and freedom. Factory output increased massively. I believe Dunkirk was a turning point that led to the post-war social national overhaul. This is what eventually led to the NHS, free education, to all these measures which grew out of the war. The post-war consensus of making life better for people was kickstarted by Dunkirk and had this not happened, I think it's very possible that these post-war measures would not have come about.

TOP
Evacuated troops arrive at Addison Road station and enjoy refreshments

ABOVE
Troops wade into the water to board rescue ships

THE POSSIBILITY

1940

PEACE WITH GERMANY?

Had the Dunkirk evacuation failed and almost the entirety of the British Expeditionary Force had been captured in France, then it is more than likely that Britain would have been forced to sue for peace with Nazi Germany. Some in the British Government, such as Lord Halifax, had seen this as a viable option and it was during the May 1940 Cabinet Crisis that he pushed for this. Following the crisis, Halifax found himself in America as Churchill's ambassador. If Operation Dynamo had failed, would this plan have become a reality?

1945

NO SOCIAL REFORMS?

Following the end of the war, it was not Winston Churchill whom the British public chose to lead them but Labour's Clement Attlee, whose programme of social reforms remains influential to this day. The National Insurance Act (1946) introduced social security, and nationalisation Acts of coal (1946), electricity and transport (1947) nationalised key parts of British industry. The Children's Act of 1948 introduced a comprehensive child care system for orphaned and poor children. Arguably the most progressive British government ever, Attlee's five-year term is one whose positive effects we are still feeling today. As Joshua Levine describes, without Dunkirk these reforms may have never have occurred.

1948

NO NHS?

Perhaps the most important of Attlee's reforms was the creation of the National Health Service (NHS), which came into being in 1948. Some of the origins of the NHS originate directly following the Dunkirk evacuation, with William Beveridge's 1942 report that outlined societal problems to be faced following the end of the war. Attlee's Health Minister, Aneurin Bevan, expressed the desire that the new health system should be based on three major principles. Firstly that it be for everyone, secondly that it be free, and finally that it would be based on need and not ability to pay.

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TORIES VOTED AGAINST IT

What if...

NAPOLEON HAD WON AT TRAFALGAR?

Nelson's victory saved Britain from the threat of invasion, but could the British have lost the 1805 naval battle?

INTERVIEW WITH

© University of Westminster

Richard Harding

Professor Richard Harding is an expert in naval history and amphibious warfare and previously edited the academic journal, *The Mariner's Mirror*. Among his numerous books are *Modern Naval History: Debates and Prospects* and *Seapower and Naval Warfare: 1650-1830*.

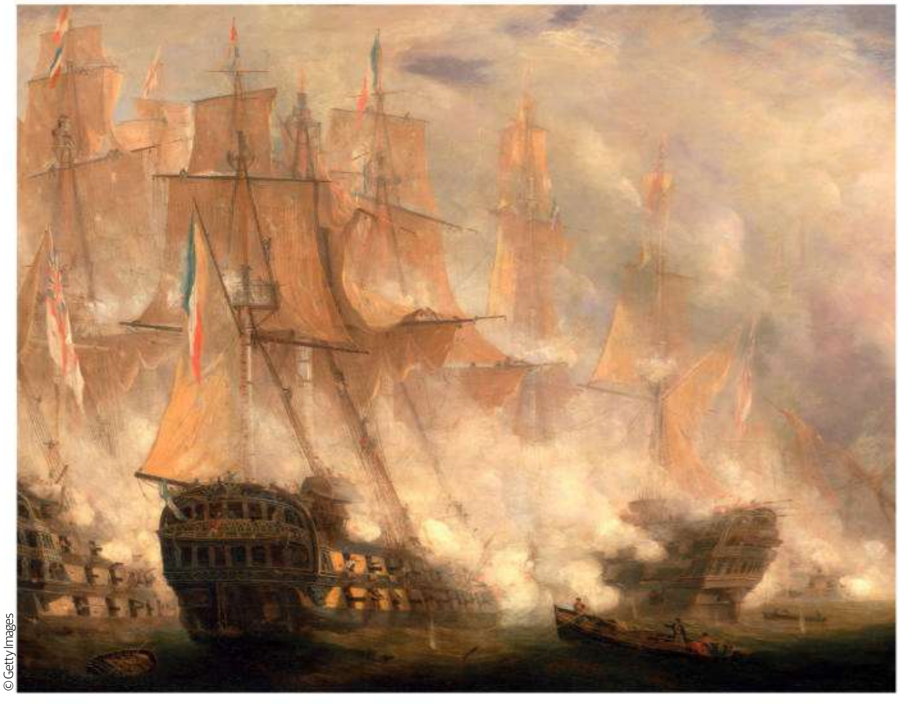
On 21 October 1805, the naval forces of Napoleon Bonaparte and his Spanish allies faced the Royal Navy, commanded by Admiral Lord Nelson, off the coast of Trafalgar, Spain. For five hours the battle raged but the British forces were able to annihilate the enemy, destroying 19 ships. However, 1,500 British seamen lost their lives, with Nelson among them. Having been shot by a sniper in the shoulder and chest, he died when victory was imminent. The Battle of Trafalgar has become the stuff of legend, with Nelson immortalised as the man who saved Britain from invasion. Yet what if Napoleon had won on that fateful day?

What is some of the wider context leading up to Trafalgar?

Napoleon thought he would be able to trick the British and move them out of position, leaving the English Channel open. Napoleon's plan was to draw the British to the West Indies, then hopefully the French Commander Villeneuve would be able to go up the Channel and control a landing on the coast. That was never going to happen, though, because the British Channel fleet never moved. The British were well aware of this plan and everything they did was geared towards continuing to consolidate control of the Channel. I think Napoleon thought that he could threaten Britain with an invasion and pressure them into some kind of treaty. On the other side of the coin, Britain couldn't win the war with just its navy, though it could certainly defend itself. What Britain needed was allies, and they created an alliance with Russia, Sweden and Austria that would force Napoleon that way. The intention was to keep both the Baltic and the Mediterranean open, because Britain was earning vast sums of money from trade in those areas.

What were the key factors in the Battle of Trafalgar?

The battle was a very unequal struggle, despite the number of ships broadly being the same. When Napoleon finally got the Spanish to join with France, declaring war on Britain in October 1804, there were another 28 Spanish ships which could now support the 34 French ones. Another factor is Villeneuve himself. He was from an old family and of good standing, but by this point he was totally demoralised. He had survived the Battle of the Nile and knew what Nelson was capable of doing - Nelson's intention was annihilation. Napoleon was also losing faith in Villeneuve and he knew this. So what we've got in terms of key factors is a French fleet heading out to sea heading to the Mediterranean, with a commander that is thoroughly depressed. On the other side we've got a British fleet that knew exactly what it was doing at this point and was determined that this would be a battle of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RIGHT John Christian Schetky's painting of the battle

Main image sources: © Alamy © Getty Images

What if…
NAPOLEON HAD WON AT TRAFALGAR?

THE PAST

1789-99

THE RISE OF NAPOLEON

Napoleon Bonaparte had made his name as a young officer during the French Revolution. On 5 October 1795 he was instrumental in stopping Royalist rebels who were marching on the National Convention, saving the Republic. Appointed commander in chief of the army in Italy, he oversaw numerous victories and organised the Treaty of Campo Formio with Austria. In 1799 he organised a coup détat, seized control and proclaimed himself the emperor of France.

1777-98

WHO WAS HORATIO NELSON?

By the time he was commanding the British forces at Trafalgar, Nelson had already established himself as a top naval commander. In 1777 he had become a lieutenant and had fought in the American Revolutionary wars. After an unsuccessful stint commanding a frigate and enforcing the Navigation Act against American ships he was without another appointment for five years, when he then fought the Revolutionary French in the Mediterranean. His victory at the Battle of Cape St Vincent in 1797 won Nelson a knighthood and a promotion to rear admiral. Another victory, at the Battle of the Nile, saw Nelson all but annihilate the French forces.

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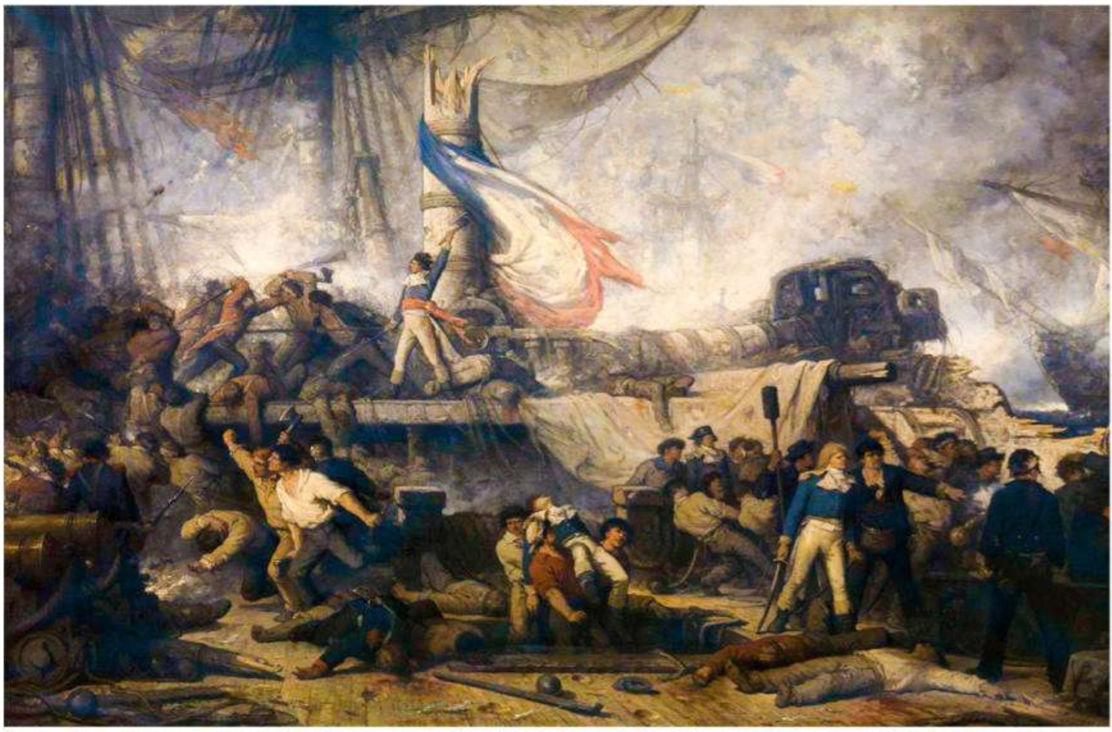
1805-6

VILLENEUVE'S CAPTURE AND DEATH

Born into a noble and established family, Pierre-Charles Villeneuve received rapid promotion upon entering the French Navy. It was his flagship, along with one other, which were the only two to escape destruction at the hands of Nelson during the Battle of the Nile. Following defeat at Trafalgar, Villeneuve was captured but released shortly after, whereupon he returned to France in disgrace. Shortly after arriving and aware that Napoleon would be severely displeased with the defeat at Trafalgar, Villeneuve committed suicide. Stabbing himself six times in the chest, this caused some to speculate he'd in fact been murdered.



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ABOVE An artist's impression of the scene aboard the French ship Algésiras during the battle

annihilation. The strongest navy was the combined fleet with about 33 ships, as opposed to the Royal Navy's 27, but the quality of the command and the quality of support was far different.

What were some of the immediate results of the battle?

It ended Napoleon's hopes of contesting the seas. It meant that he didn't have the capacity to be really disruptive in trying to attack the British colonies, either in the West Indies or in the East Indies.
It didn't save Britain from the threat of invasion but it did ensure the security of British maritime communications and also secured British access to markets in the Mediterranean. Despite Napoleon's actions, most of Europe still wanted British goods. Due to their victory the British were able to import goods into Europe from the Mediterranean and the Baltic. However it did not have the dramatic impact of saving Britain from invasion, which I think is the crucial thing. The 19th and 20th century British narrative is that all that stood between Britain and the Napoleonic invasion was Nelson and a few ships, which simply wasn't the case.

Are there any instances where the combined fleet could have won?

Put simply, no. The French and Spanish performed a single line and Nelson had split his own line into two. Recently, during the Bicentenary, the battle was modelled on a computer and it was quite clear that what Nelson did as he approached the French and Spanish was to move as if he was going to attack further to the front of the French line. This caused Villeneuve to push his own line further out, so they couldn't support the two parts of the line which were cut. It was a pretty one-sided event. I can't see where during the battle that Villeneuve could have actually won.

What if the British government had not concluded the treaty of the Third Coalition with Austria in August 1805? Might that have meant Napoleon's Grand Armee was still on the Channel coast by the time a critical battle at sea occurred?

What strikes me about this whole affair was the importance of Britain negotiating the Third Coalition in getting Sweden and Russia on board, and by August involving Austria too. Once that happened Napoleon gave up any idea of invading Britain. He had to move his army to the east in order to confront the Austrians. If that hadn't happened, then the army would still have been on the Channel coast. Whether, despite that defeat, Napoleon would have tried to find other means is an interesting question. Again, though, highly difficult because you only have small ships to cross the channel in. He needed a long period of good weather and he needed to keep his communications open for probably six weeks. If the British hadn't concluded that treaty then it's possible that the

French might have found some kind of way to get across the Channel but it would have been a very small chance.

What if Villeneuve had been more aggressive in his approach to the Battle of Trafalgar?

This is a great point for French historians. Before Villeneuve was put in command there was an admiral called La Touche-Tréville and he had previously beaten Nelson. He was a different kettle of fish to Villeneuve, and he would also have stood up to Napoleon when he was making impossible demands. It's likely he would have also worked better with the Spanish as well, because the Spanish fleet was in relatively good condition and its officers were extremely good. Essentially you would have a far better naval commander, far stronger in terms of his relationships with his Spanish collaborators, and someone who would've stood up to Napoleon. That's one of the great questions surrounding the battle: what if someone who had fought Nelson and beaten him had been in command? The whole campaign would have been very different.

Could it have led to an invasion of England? Were there plans in place?

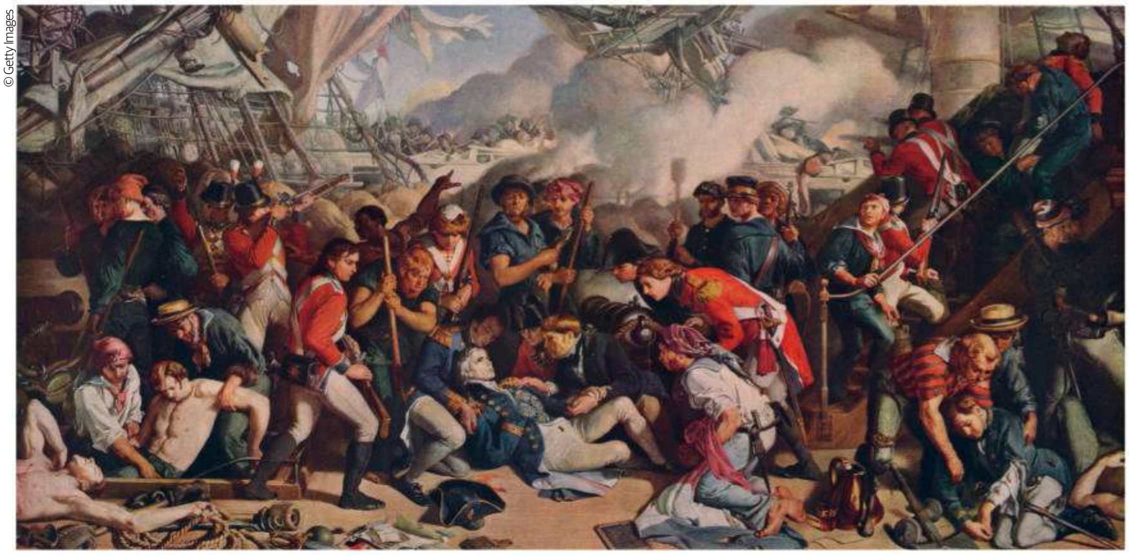
There was a whole series of plans, dating right back to revolutionary times, and Napoleon had a number of his own. But could a victory for him at Trafalgar have led to an invasion? It would have been extremely unlikely. Even if Britain had been defeated, the French and Spanish would've had to go on fighting their way up the Channel, defeating equally large forces with a reducing number of ships. I think I'm right in saying that Napoleon had estimated that he needed about 138,000 troops to capture London, and he only ever had the capacity to land 90,000. It's unlikely that one defeat of the British off the coast of southern Spain would have led to an invasion, but there were plans.

If Napoleon had won, what could some of the immediate consequences have been?

It would have put more pressure upon the British expedition to Southern Italy. Prior to the Battle of Trafalgar the British had sent a force to the Kingdom of Naples, with Russian support. As it happened, British attempts to stop the French invasion in Naples failed anyway, but it would have made it much more complicated.

Could a French victory at Trafalgar have had a wider historical impact?

If it had been a victory it would have put the seal on Napoleon's reputation as a strategic genius. If the Royal Navy had been thrown out of its position we would have a different view of Napoleon. In France, Napoleon's reputation as a land commander is almost second to none, but to me it was his ineptitude in many ways of understanding the sea that let him down. I think we would also have a different world in some respects because Britain would have become part of the Napoleonic empire, even if it were through giving up its colonial possessions. The British had taken numerous French colonies and it's likely that the French would have insisted that they took those back. So it was a big ask for a victory to take place, but it would have had a massive historical impact.



BELOW
The death of Nelson, who became immortalised as a British hero

© Getty Images

THE POSSIBILITY

1805

INVASION?

While Napoleon was in exile on St Helena towards the end of his life, he noted to his doctor, Barry O'Meara, that: "It was my firm intention to invade England and to head the expedition myself." Napoleon then outlined his plan of drawing off the Royal Navy, then sail up the Channel and land an army that would march on and seize the capital. O'Meara described how the two became involved in a debate as to the viability of such a plan and whether the British population would not have resisted and taken to the streets to defend the city. However, interestingly, Napoleon claimed that during the proposed march on London he would have exercised the most extreme discipline towards his troops and that he would have come to Britain as a 'friend' of the people. He said: "Marauding or otherwise injuring or insulting the inhabitants would have been punished with instant death."

1803

LA TOUCHE-TRÉVILLE

In 1803, Admiral Louis-René de La Touche-Tréville had successfully managed to hold back the forces of Nelson while at Boulogne. In 1804, while off Toulon, La Touche-Tréville intercepted Nelson as he was on the way to capture two French vessels. Nelson turned back, followed by La Touche-Tréville, who then used the event to publicly humiliate the British admiral. For Nelson's part, this began a bitter rivalry and he insulted his adversary numerous times. For La Touche-Tréville, he spoke of a desire to "have another confrontation with his colleague, Nelson". La Touche-Tréville died in 1804 but had he lived to see Trafalgar it may have been he, and not Villeneuve, who commanded the French/Spanish forces. If so, it would have been the final titanic duel between two rivals.

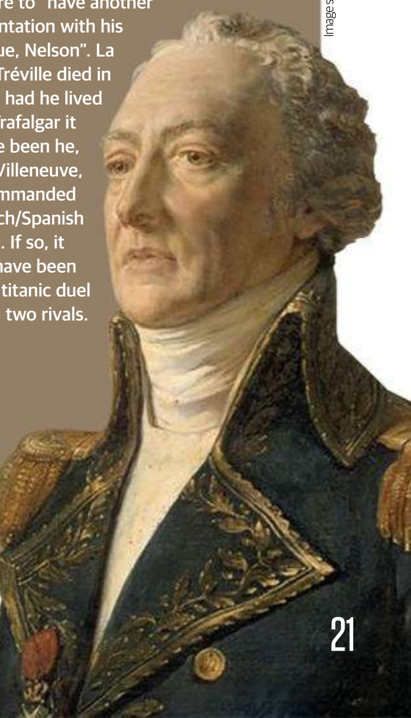


Image source: wiki/ Palace of Versailles

What if...

LENIN HAD BEEN ASSASSINATED?

In 1918, an attempt was made on the life of Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin. Who was behind it and what if it had succeeded?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Jason Ackerman

Barnes Carr

A former reporter and editor, Barnes Carr is the author of *Operation Whisper: The Capture Of Soviet Spies Morris And Lona Cohen* and *The Lenin Plot*. An award-winning author, he previously worked as an executive producer for WRNO Worldwide, a shortwave radio station that provided new Orleans Jazz and R&B to the Soviet Union in the last years of the USSR.

What was the Lenin Plot?

The Lenin Plot was a secret operation led by the United States to stage a coup d'état in Moscow, assassinate Soviet dictator Vladimir Lenin and his cabinet, then install an Allied-friendly 'dictatorship' in the Kremlin to get Russia back in the World War. They worked closely with British, French and Latvian agents, the Czech army, a Socialist Revolutionary force and other 'loyalist' Russians faithful to the Allied cause. Western forces invaded European Russia in an attempt to defeat the Red Army and support the coup.

President Woodrow Wilson and Secretary of State Robert Lansing originated the plot in December 1917 after the Bolsheviks took power. Initially the plan was to hire a Cossack army to turn out Lenin. Lansing advised Wilson that this was probably illegal and that US funds should be sent to the British and French as war aid so they could launder the money for the plot. "This has my entire approval," Wilson told Lansing.

Why was Wilson and the US so keen to depose Lenin?

After the Bolsheviks grabbed power in October 1917, Lenin announced he was taking the country out of the war. This was a secret deal he had cut with Germany after the war began. Berlin supplied the Bolsheviks with millions of marks, laundered in Stockholm, to help Lenin take control of Russia and shut down the three Russian fronts. This allowed Germany to move divisions over to the Western Front, the main battleground. The payments are listed in records of the German Foreign Ministry, at the National Archives in Washington DC.

Second, the humanitarian factor. The Russian Provisional that took power after the revolution of February 1917 declared an amnesty for all political prisoners and exiles. The paranoid Lenin was having none of that. He called himself Batyushka, the nickname of Tsar Nicholas II, and gave his secret police, the Cheka, a virtual 'licence to kill' his opponents, real or imagined. The Western powers felt that Comrade Chairman had stopped the legitimate revolution, which was supported by the Allies, and replaced it with a bloody, illegal regime that was taking Russia back to old tsarist days of mass arrests, terror, torture and murder. Historians in Russia that I talked with do not use the term Bolshevik 'revolution' – they call it a coup, or simply a seizure of power.

Third, the democracy component. The provisional government had scheduled a constituent assembly to decide what kind of government Russia would have in the future. In the election of delegates, the Socialist Revolutionaries, Russia's largest party, won 17,134,161 votes; the Bolsheviks got 9,844,637. The Socialist Revolutionaries were awarded 370 seats, the Bolsheviks 175. Lenin invaded the chambers with armed sailors and dismissed the assembly.

There were economic considerations too. Russia had the second-largest population in the world. After the

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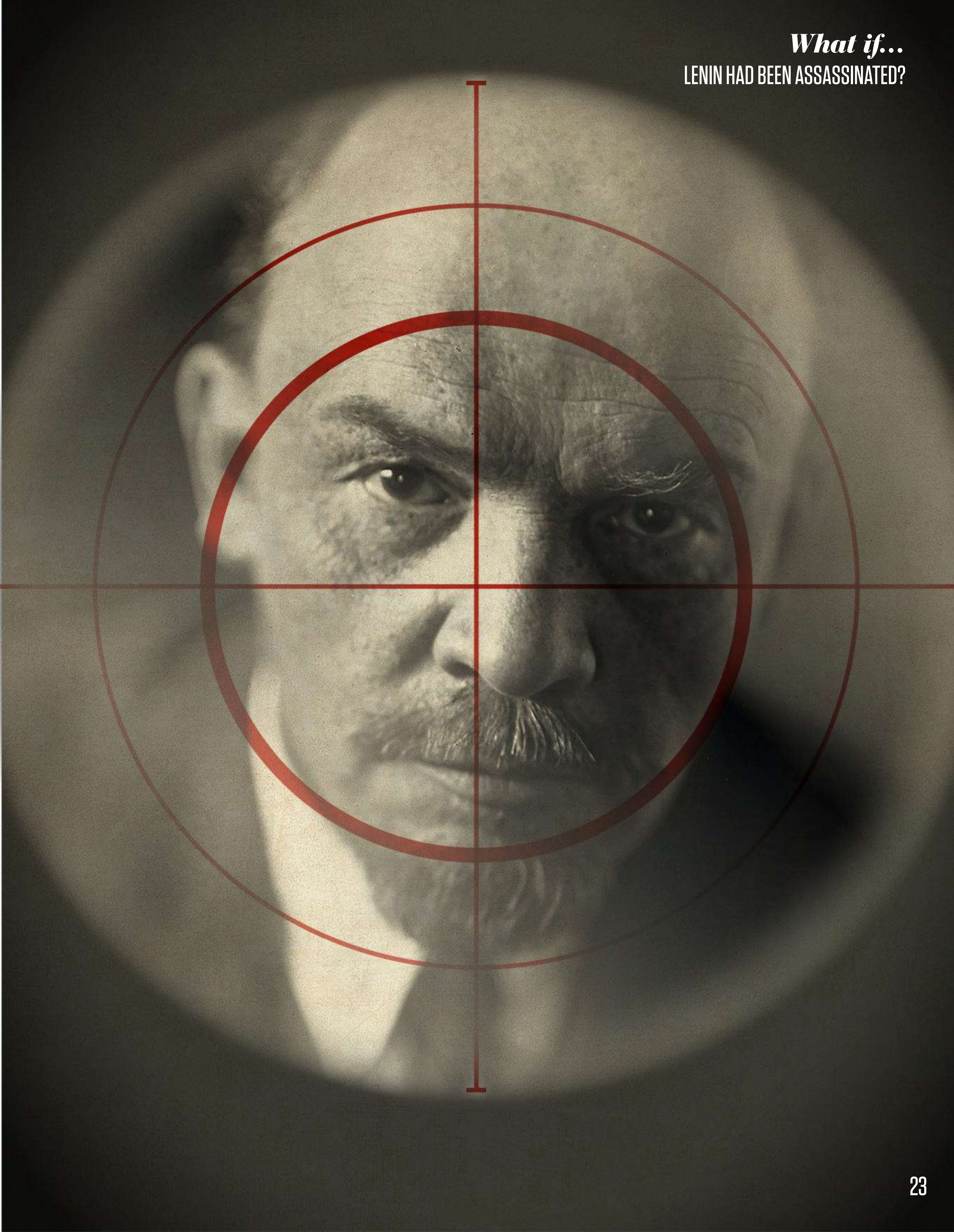
Main image source: wiki/ Pavel Semyonovich Zhukov

RIGHT
The Bolshevik revolution in 1917



THE PAST

1848

MARXISM IN RUSSIA

Karl Marx's *The Communist Manifesto* was published in 1848 to little immediate fanfare. While Marx himself was in Paris on the invitation of the provincial government following the outbreak of the revolution in 1848, and sporadic revolutions occurred throughout Europe during the same year, the mass communist rising that Marx had predicted never occurred. However, the document itself endured and continues to be the main manifesto for communist parties throughout the world nearly 200 years later. However, it would be Vladimir Lenin who would transpose the document into a government system for a turn-of-the-century Russia.

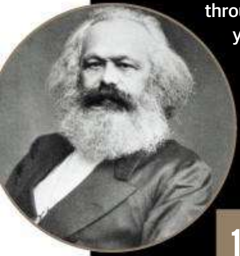


Image source: wiki/ International Institute of Social History

1870 – 1924

WHO WAS LENIN?

The head of the Bolshevik party, Vladimir Lenin (born Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov) became a Marxist after being expelled from college and immersing himself in political writings. He had first become radicalised following the execution of his brother at the hands of the state for plotting to assassinate Tsar Alexander III. Exiled to Siberia, Ilyich Ulyanov adopted the name Lenin and founded the Bolshevik Party. Returning to Russia in 1917 among strikes over food shortages and the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, the revolution was already in full swing.

© Alamy

1856 – 1924

WHO WAS WOODROW WILSON?

The 28th president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson was president between 1913 and 1921. During his time he introduced numerous pieces of legislation, banning child labour, limiting railroad workers to an eight-hour day and banning unfair business practices, among a host of other laws. He had originally attempted to keep America out of World War I but in 1917 felt he could do so no longer.

Image source: wiki/ Library of Congress

war it would be a booming market for American goods like cars, tractors, refrigerators, tobacco, jeans, tennis shoes and jazz records. Other countries had the same idea. American business interests wanted to move fast and get in on the ground floor.

What happened during the assassination attempt on Lenin and how involved was the US?

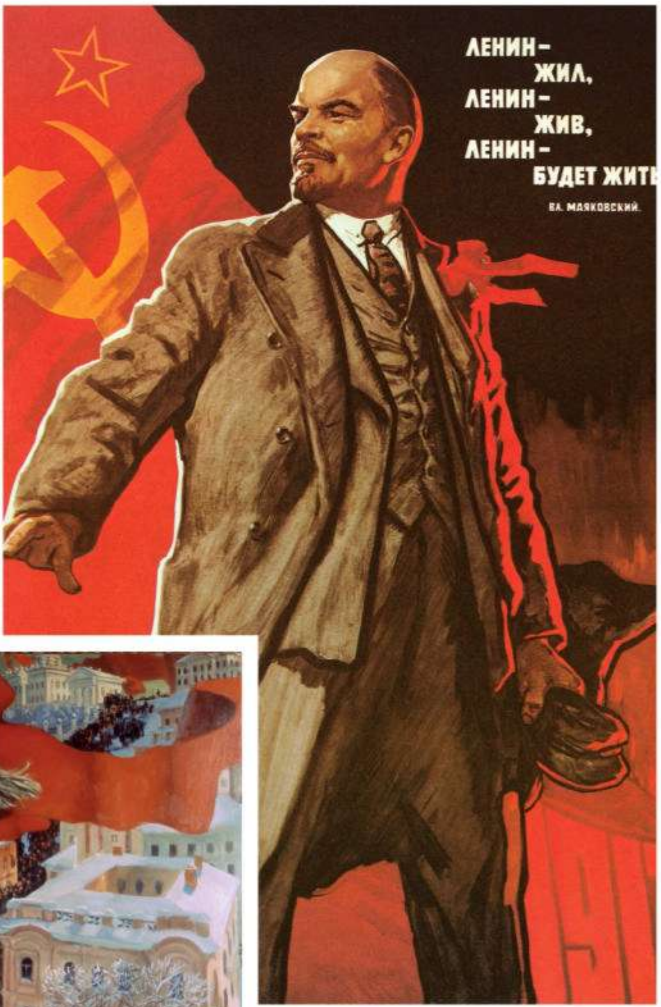
Two of the Lenin plotters in Moscow, Sidney Reilly, a Russian recruit to the British Secret Service, and Boris Savinkov, an SR terrorist hired by the Allies (both of them drug addicts) planned to kill Lenin and his cabinet during the All-Russian Congress of Soviets in August 1918. A Cheka mole inside the Lenin Plot later indicated that the Americans and French were in on the scheme. Indeed, Yakov Peters, the number-two man in the Cheka, said the Americans were the "most compromised" in the plot.

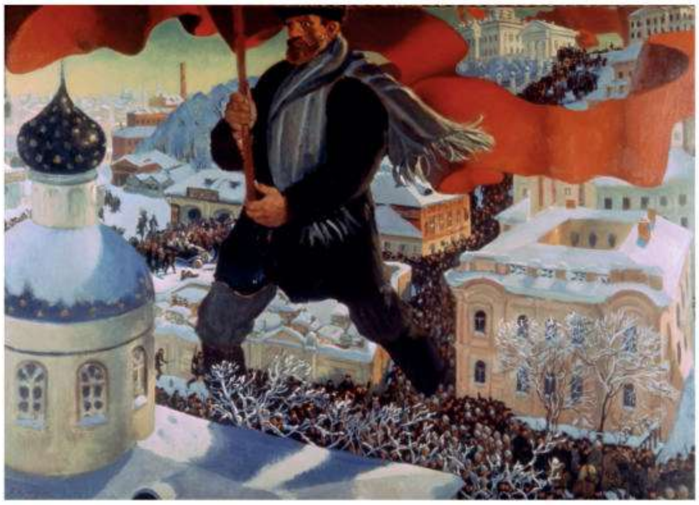
A hardened Socialist Revolutionary terrorist, Fanny Kaplan, shot Lenin three times, in the neck and chest, after he made a speech at a Moscow factory. Lenin survived, but the attack amplified the Red Terror. Thousands of Russians were rounded up and executed by the Cheka in retaliation for the attempt on Lenin. When the Allied agent Savinkov later wrote his memoirs he told his translator that he was the one who gave Kaplan her pistol.

What happened when the Americans sent an expeditionary force to Russia in 1918?

There were three Allied invasions of European Russia – first at Murmansk, then twice at Archangel. The second Archangel invasion, in September 1918, was the largest and its biggest contingent was the American army. US officers in the field called it an 'American show'. Russians called it the 'American invasion' and the 'Wilson invasion'. An American. newspaper referred to it as 'Wilson's war'. (There was a parallel Allied invasion in Siberia, but it had nothing to do with the Lenin Plot.)

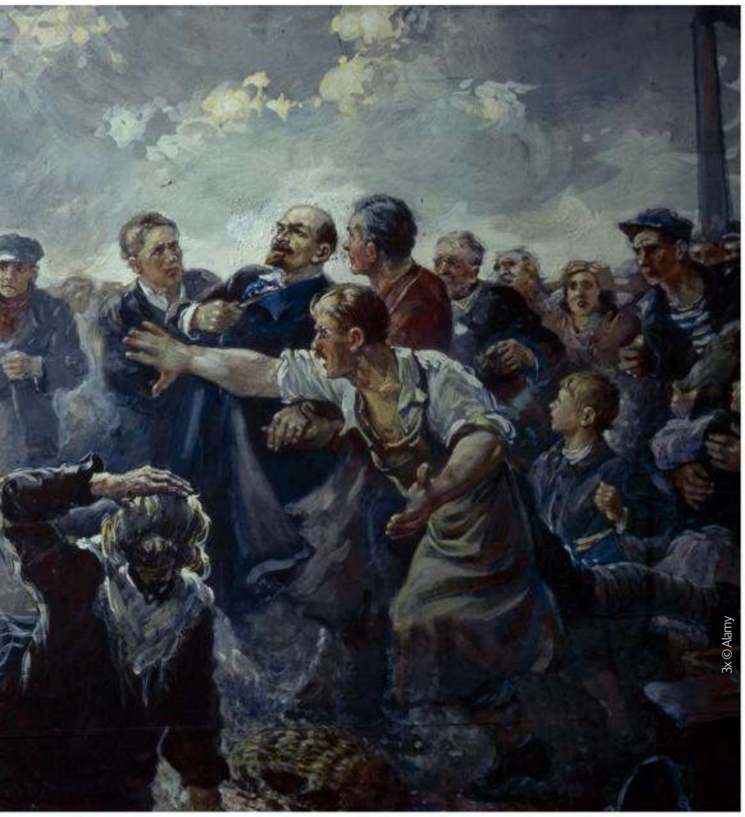
The American ambassador David Francis, along with consul general DeWitt Poole, who was control officer for American agents in Russia, wanted the invasion force to support the Lenin Plot. But they got bogged down fighting a north Russian winter war and could not advance on Moscow or Petrograd. They were finally defeated by the Red Army and driven out of Russia. Nearly 600 American troops were dead or missing in action. American Lieutenant John Cudahy called the war "an unprovoked, intensive, inglorious little armed conflict which had ended in disaster and disgrace".





LEFT
Painting celebrating the Bolshevik revolution, showing a giant Lenin leading the masses

ABOVE
A late-1960s Soviet propaganda poster using the image of Lenin



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ABOVE Painting of Lenin following the assassination attempt

What were some of the repercussions of the US interference?
If the term Cold War can be defined as an attempt to defeat another country militarily, politically, economically, or culturally without a formal declaration of war, then the Lenin Plot was the true beginning of it. The Lenin Plot was a colossal embarrassment for the US and the Allies. Russia had been a former ally in the war. Russia had not invaded any Western nations or plotted to assassinate their leaders.

Washington tried to cover it up. Veterans of the invasion could not even get copies of their service records. Wilson publicly denied any "intervention" or "interference" in Russia's "sovereignty". In congressional testimony, Poole denied "completely and entirely" the reports that his main field agent, Xenophon Kalamatiano, a University of Chicago graduate, was a spy. "I want to deny any implication of activity against the Soviet republic," Poole said.

The cover-up continued for decades. In 1933 President Roosevelt claimed that a "happy tradition of friendship" had existed between America and Russia "for more that a century". President Reagan in 1984 said in a TV address to the USSR that "our sons and daughters have never fought each other in war".

But Russia never forgot. Kremlin bosses used the Lenin Plot as a casus belli for stealing Western military secrets such as radar, the proximity fuse, and the atomic bomb, and for fighting surrogate hot wars against the West. What President Kennedy called "the long twilight struggle" didn't end with the fall of Soviet Communism in 1991, despite President Obama's claim in 2012 that the Cold War had been "over for 20 years".

In *Operation Whisper*, my first Cold War history, I quoted Sergei Tretyakov, a KGB defector, as saying: "Nothing has changed. The SVR [Russian foreign intelligence] rezidenturas [bases for resident spies] in the US are not less active but in some respects even more active." That is, through satellite surveillance, computer hacking, wire taps, fake news, phony intelligence and, as always, agents on the ground stealing secrets.

Had the assassination attempt on Lenin and the US plot to invade Russia succeeded, what could some of the immediate effects have been?
Millions of troops would have been required to occupy Russia and prop up the Allies' dictator in the Kremlin. It's doubtful the US Congress or the British and French parliaments would have approved that. The Allied dictator would have to raise his own army. But how long could he last? Trotsky had a million men under his command in 1918. Russia would simply continue fighting her existing civil war.

Moving through the 20th century, how might the world have been different because of this?
A Russian friend of mine recently went home to St Petersburg for a visit and was appalled to read in a media poll that Stalin enjoyed continued approval in the country. Russians have always been tolerant of autocrats. And any Russian dictator installed by the Allies would eventually flex his muscles and evict the Western operatives, then resume the Cold War that had started in 1917.

Russians, like Americans, feel that they are a special people. The same old ambitions, animosities, jealousies and enemies' lists would be in place. Only the names in the headlines would change.

" The Lenin Plot was a colossal embarrassment for the US and the Allies "

THE POSSIBILITY

1918-22

THE RED TERROR

Following the assassination attempt on Lenin in 1918, a state-sponsored wave of executions and brutality began, lasting into 1922. Tens of thousands of individuals were rounded up and placed in prison camps or executed. Organised by the Bolshevik's secret police organisation, the Cheka, all suspected 'Whites' (the enemies of the Bolsheviks, or 'Reds') were hunted down. The period was seen by those involved as the final extermination of the bourgeoisie who had escaped the initial revolution. With so much of its history shrouded in secrecy, it is impossible to ever know the full extent of the chaos. Had an assassination attempt on Lenin not been made, it's possible that the purge would not have been so violent.

© Alamy

1879 – 1940

TROTSKY

Had the US successfully assassinated Lenin and placed a leader of their liking in his place, it is likely that the civil war would have continued with the Bolshevik army under the command of Leon Trotsky. The man who transformed the Red Army, Trotsky would later be assassinated by a Soviet agent with a pickaxe. Previously working closely with Lenin during the revolution, he fell foul of Joseph Stalin after he lost a power struggle to the would-be dictator. Becoming increasingly critical of his rivals' methods, he was forced to flee and was finally offered asylum in Mexico in 1938, where he would be killed two years later. Had Lenin been assassinated, it is unsure what Trotsky's role would have been.

Image source: wiki/Marxists.org

What if...

MARILYN MONROE HAD LIVED?

After defeating her darkest demons, what could the world expect from the iconic star in later years?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Laura Saxby

Laura Saxby

Laura is a dedicated fan of Marilyn Monroe and founder of **ourmarilynmonroe.com**. The site offers a rich mix of insights, rare photos and analyses, celebrating Marilyn's timeless legacy. It's a fitting tribute to a legendary icon, keeping Marilyn's spirit alive for new generations to admire. Laura also debunks myths about the star on Instagram **@themythsofmarilyn**

In 1962, the world was stunned by the tragic death of Marilyn Monroe, a symbol of beauty and fame, who passed away at just 36. Her untimely demise has been attributed to her reliance on prescription drugs, a conclusion drawn from scientific analysis, though whether it was intentional or accidental remains a mystery. Over the years, her passing has captivated theorists and filled numerous books. Some biographers, like Norman Mailer, have conceded that their works and murder theories were financially motivated and held no merit. However, no matter how Marilyn died, it's intriguing to ponder an alternative scenario: what if Marilyn had been rescued that fateful night? What different path might her life have taken?

If Marilyn's career had continued, what would it have looked like and for how long? For example, could she have won an Oscar?

Marilyn's film career might have evolved significantly had she lived longer. Given her talent, passion, and the changing nature of Hollywood roles for women, it's quite possible she would have transitioned into more complex and dramatic roles as per her long-term goals, which might have led her to critical acclaim and potentially an Oscar. Her comedic prowess was certainly undeniable, and she had shown depth in films like *The Misfits*, suggesting a promising trajectory.

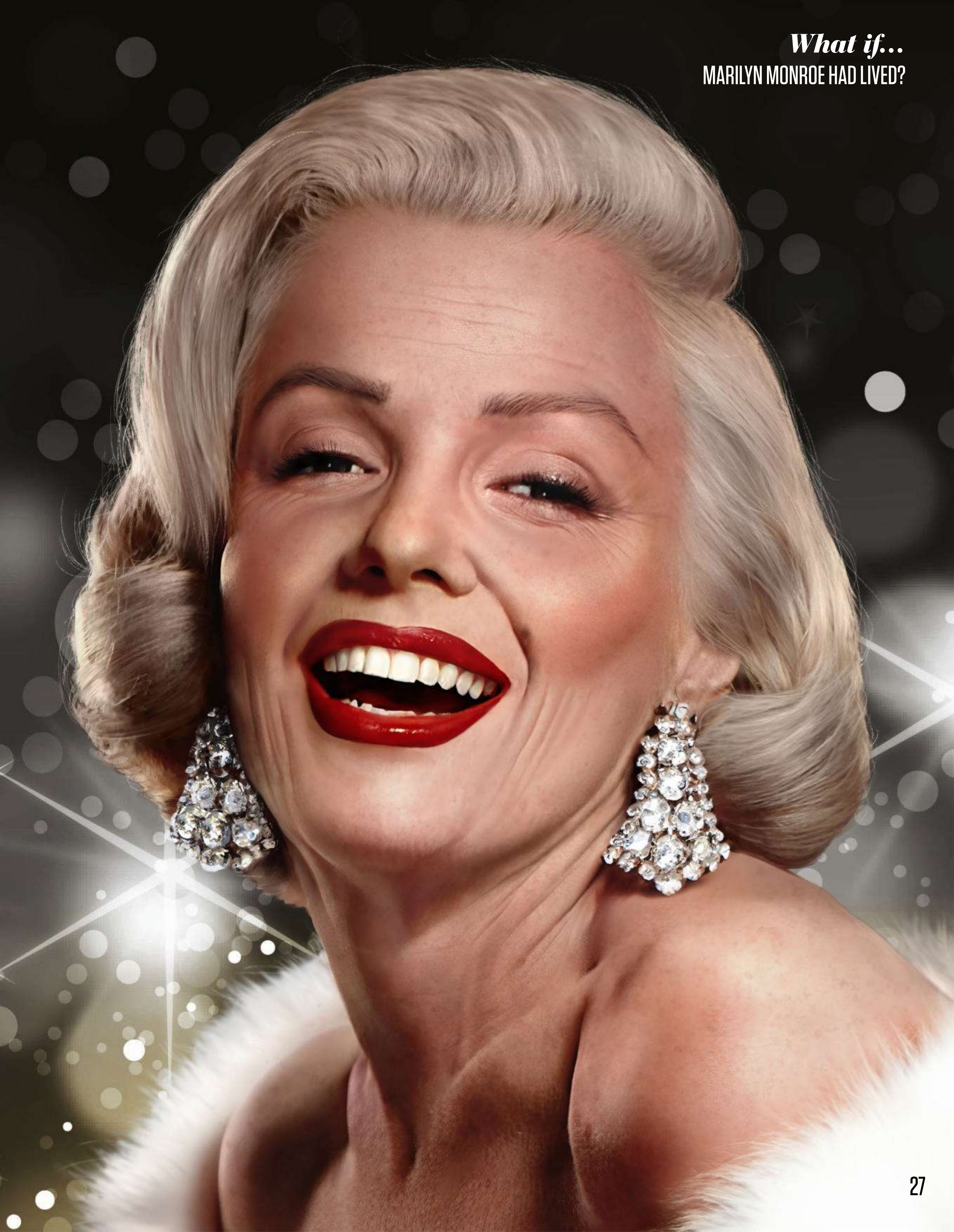
In 1955, Marilyn, in collaboration with photographer Milton Greene, established Marilyn Monroe Productions. She compiled a list of directors she aspired to work with, notable names including Charlie Chaplin and Alfred Hitchcock. This initiative aimed to grant her greater authority over her acting roles and film projects. However, despite the eventual dissolution of this production company, Marilyn explored the idea of founding a new one alongside her acting coach, Lee Strasberg, and the renowned actor Marlon Brando. In a poignant letter to Strasberg penned in 1961, Marilyn expressed that resuming her work was her "only trustworthy hope" to aid in overcoming her mental health and emotional stability challenges.

The industry was also shifting towards a New Hollywood era, which could have provided her with opportunities to work with up-and-coming as well as established directors and on more avant-garde projects, further diversifying her portfolio and extending her career possibly into the late 20th century.

If the film industry had become challenging due to Fox's financial difficulties, Marilyn might have contemplated switching studios or exploring opportunities in theatre, television, or even radio. Throughout her career, she expressed a keen interest in theatrical performances, yet she rarely seized such opportunities. In 1952, she said, "I'd like to do roles like Julie in *Bury the Dead*, Gretchen in *Faust* and Teresa in *Cradle Song*. I don't want to be a comedienne forever." This reluctance could have stemmed from her fear of inadequacy. However, had she lived longer, the shifts in her life might have diminished these fears, encouraging her

Main image source: © Alamy/Sara Biddle

RIGHT
Gentlemen Prefer Blondes was a platform for Marilyn's singing talent



THE PAST

1944

INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

Born Norma Jeane Mortenson on 1 June 1926, her childhood is full of upheaval with a mother in and out of mental institutions. After several years in an orphanage and foster homes she marries a neighbour, James Dougherty. She is 16. At 18 she is working a factory assembly line for war work and is photographed for a promotional feature. This catches the eye of modelling agencies and in 1946 she signs a contract with 20th Century Fox. Her name is changed to Marilyn Monroe and her brown hair is dyed blonde. Later the same year she is divorced, and the following year her contract is terminated.

Image source: Alamy

1948-59

RISING TO THE TOP

After a spell with Columbia Pictures Marilyn lands small roles in *Asphalt Jungle* and *All About Eve*. In 1949 Marilyn courts controversy by posing nude for the 'Golden Dreams' calendar. This was later used as part of the launch for Hugh Hefner's new magazine. Marilyn becomes *Playboy*'s first centrefold in 1953. Her career now moves into another gear, with a breakthrough performance in *Niagara*, then *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* and the iconic song 'Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend'. With a string of hit films, Marilyn gets the acclaim of the industry in 1960 with a Golden Globe for Best Actress in *Some Like It Hot*.

1960 – PRESENT

EPILOGUE

Her third husband, Arthur Miller, writes the script to *The Misfits* as a present for Marilyn. The following year they are divorced. In 1962 she is voted World Film Favourite at the Golden Globes, and in April starts shooting her last movie, *Something's Got to Give*. The title would prove to be somewhat prophetic. In May she appears in a figure-hugging sequined dress to sing 'Happy Birthday' for JFK. On 5 August 1962, Marilyn is found dead of an apparent barbiturate overdose at her Brentwood home. The power of Marilyn Monroe as an icon of visual imagery – from the Andy Warhol Diptych to the mesmerising racy energy of the famous skirt-blowing scene from the *Seven Year Itch* – will never fade. Her image will endure, frozen in time.

to embrace the opportunities presented to her.

What would her personal life have looked like – relationships/marriage/children? Would she have been part of a showbiz couple, and with whom?

Marilyn's personal life was as much a subject of fascination to fans and the media as her screen presence. However, in 1962, Marilyn was primarily concentrating on her future as an artist, as well as on her personal growth, rather than pursuing relationships. This was despite the prevalent rumours of remarriage to Joe DiMaggio.

During this period, Marilyn and Joe were frequently seen together, yet both they and their close associates consistently denied any romantic resurgence in their relationship. Following her separation from Arthur Miller, Marilyn's primary focus was on her career and addressing her health challenges. These included recovering from gall bladder surgery, managing chronic sinusitis, and dealing with the psychological impact of a wrongful institutionalisation, which had significantly eroded her trust. Joe, still harbouring deep affection for Marilyn, offered her a grounding presence and emotional support without pressuring her to rekindle their past romance. She said to her masseuse, Ralph Roberts in January 1961, "Each of us is very happy to be back together. Each of us feels we should not rush into anything serious… If each of us wants to see another person, we should do so." During this time, Marilyn briefly and casually dated Frank Sinatra and was accompanied to the Golden Globes by José Bolaños, a prominent Mexican director.

Concerning having children, it would have been challenging for her due to her fertility issues, but she had expressed interest in adoption in 1962. She said "I used to feel [that] for every child I had, I would adopt another, but I don't think a single person should adopt children. There's no ma or pa there."

Her move back to Los Angeles, her new home, and settling down in Brentwood made her feel settled. As she stated to George Barris, "I'm thirty-six years old, I'm just getting started!".

Could scandal around JFK have held her back, or even damaged his presidency? Could she have married a Kennedy?

The relationship between Marilyn and JFK has been a topic of much debate and rumour, one which has little basis in fact. Before meeting JFK in person, she stated to Ralph Roberts, "In what I see, he doesn't have an appeal to me".

ABOVE
Marilyn's acting range was greater that often given credit for

Kennedy was well known for his extramarital affairs (including with members of his own staff) and at the most he had a one-night stand with Marilyn at Bing Crosby's Palm Springs home. It's speculated this is where he requested she perform at his birthday gala in May 1962.

Had this rendezvous been made public at the time, it's unlikely there would've been any serious implications for either her career or his presidency, despite the era's moral expectations.

As for Robert Kennedy, which is often speculated upon, Marilyn had been outspoken about the rumours, stating in July 1962, "you know it isn't true". Marilyn had also said to her friend, Ralph Roberts, that she admired and respected Bobby but he wasn't her type.

The widespread rumours around her relations with the Kennedys hadn't really started until a decade after she died. Her connections with the Kennedy brothers are tenuous. Their timelines show few (mostly public) events where they would've even been in the same room. This is something [my website], **ourmarilynmonroe.com**, covers in detail.

As for marriage, it seems incredibly unlikely as Marilyn had stated to her close friends that her one-night stand with John F Kennedy in Palm Springs was nothing serious. She certainly wasn't interested in a committed relationship at that time. Marilyn said to George Barris

in 1962, just weeks before her death: "I'm just mad about men. If only there was someone special – of course I would like to be in love. But for marriage again? It hasn't entered my mind since my last one [to Arthur Miller]."

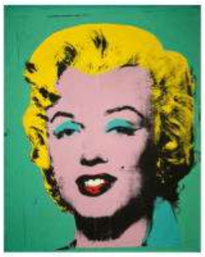
What sort of impact would JFK's assassination (and later RFK's) have had on her?

The assassinations of JFK and RFK were national traumas that affected the entire country, and for someone who might have been personally connected, the impact would have been profound. Marilyn was an acquaintance, although not particularly close to them, however she was close to their sister, Patricia Kennedy Lawford.

When she spoke about John and Robert Kennedy with friends, the conversations were predominantly centred around their political ideologies. In a letter addressed to both Arthur Miller's son, Bobby Miller, and his father, Isidore Miller, she detailed her initial encounter with Bobby Kennedy in early February 1962. This account notably corrects an error on Julien's website, which incorrectly dates the event. Marilyn's mention of her Brentwood home, acquired in February 1962, not 1961, serves as a key point of reference for the accurate timeline.

The letter reads, "Oh, Bobby, guess what: I had dinner last night with the Attorney-General of the United States, Robert Kennedy, and I asked him what his department was going to do about Civil Rights and some other issues. He's very intelligent, and besides all that, he's got a terrific sense of humour. I think you would like him. Anyway, I had to go to this dinner last night as he was the guest of honour and when they asked him who he wanted to meet, he wanted to meet me. So, I went to the dinner, and I sat next to him, and he isn't a bad dancer either."

Newspaper reports and press photos show Robert Kennedy boarding a flight with his wife Ethel on 1 February 1962, as they were to embark on a goodwill tour with the dinner in Los Angeles being held in his honour.



ABOVE
Warhol's pop art has ensured Marilyn's image lives on

BELOW
This iconic scene from *The Seven Year Itch* enraged Joe DiMaggio

590
Fleurette
Jewelry

3x © Alamy Images

How would she face the challenges of growing older? How could she have had more control over her private life and public image?

As Marilyn aged, she would probably have had to deal with Hollywood's well-documented ageism, especially for actresses. However, she could have used her intellect and business acumen – seen in her founding of a production company – to take control of her career choices and image, perhaps moving into roles behind the camera as a director or producer. Controlling her narrative might have meant stepping back from the media frenzy, choosing privacy over publicity, and advocating for her professional interests.

Regarding her appearance, Marilyn once revealed, "I want to grow old without facelifts. I want to be loyal to the face I've made." Additionally, she explained to George Barris that, "Women as they grow older should take heart. They've gained wisdom. They're really silly when they're twenty."

Could she have become involved in activism? Fighting addiction, abuse, HIV/AIDS, world poverty, becoming a UN Ambassador, for example?

Marilyn's own struggles with addiction (of barbiturates) and mental health issues could have made her a powerful advocate for those causes. As celebrities of her era, like Elizabeth Taylor, began to engage with activism, Marilyn might have followed suit. Her fame could have brought significant attention to the fight against HIV/AIDS, or other humanitarian efforts. It's entirely possible that her empathy, borne of personal struggle, would have led her to lend her voice to encourage change on a global scale.

THE POSSIBILITY

1962 ONWARDS

WISDOM AND STYLE

For many other 'starlets' of the time, such as Elizabeth Taylor, Barbara Stanwyck, and Joan Collins, their willingness to adapt to other roles and take their talent beyond mere beauty and spectacle opened up a new range of opportunities. Marilyn was deeply aware of how such wisdom comes with time, and there is no reason why she would not have been able to carve out a new career path for herself as a more mature, strong female character. Television, as it grew during the 1960s into a global entertainment phenomenon, could have been the platform she needed to achieve that goal, and her ability for comedy as well as tragedy would have generated many opportunities.

1962 ONWARDS

AND THE OSCAR GOES TO...

Throughout her career, and even up to the present day, opinions on Marilyn's talent as an actress divide the critics. What cannot be ignored is that she won well-deserved accolades from the film industry, both for serious performances and her comedic roles. The people loved her, and as a box office draw, film producers would still believe that they had a bankable asset in an older Marilyn. Were her career to have progressed into the 1960s, 1970s and beyond, there is no reason to rule out that she would have eventually scooped an Academy Award.

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1980 ONWARDS

EMPATHY BORNE OUT OF EXPERIENCE

With such a traumatic upbringing, and later struggles with her mental health and prescription drugs, it is very possible that an older, wiser, and more mature Marilyn would have used the depth of her own experiences to give encouragement, support, and hope to others through charitable means. It could be an existing charity, or by the creation of her own foundation. But whatever the cause she chose to support – children with unstable family backgrounds, mental health, drug addiction – she would be much more than just another star with a cause; she would be a voice of authority who bears the scars, and who found the strength to come through the dark days of 1962 to give even more to the world than she already had.

What if...

POMPEY HAD DEFEATED JULIUS CAESAR?

How the outcome of one battle would have changed the history of the Roman Empire as we know it

INTERVIEW WITH

© Dr Simon Elliott

Dr Simon Elliott

Dr Elliott is a bestselling author, historian, archaeologist, broadcaster, and Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Kent. His books include *Roman Legionaries*, *Julius Caesar: Rome's Greatest Warlord* and *Roman Conquests: Britain*

Former political allies, and even allied through marriage, Julius Caesar and Pompey faced each other across a battlefield at Pharsalus in Greece, in 48 BCE, as deadly enemies. Political convenience had turned to dust and the outcome of this battle would determine the fate of both men, and the future of Rome and its influence in the world.

Was it inevitable that Pompey and Caesar would come to blows? How different were they, and was Pompey as ambitious as Caesar?

Yes, absolutely they would have come to blows. Both were the leading protagonists in their generation for the two main political factions in Roman politics. These were the optimates who were reactionary and pro-Senate, and the populares who were in favour of reform and supported by the lower orders of the Roman aristocracy and society. They were both the latest incumbents to champion their respective causes, following on from Lucius Cornelius Sulla and Gaius Marius in the preceding generation.

While both men were ambitious, it was Caesar who definitely had the edge. All political leaders of the Roman Republic were in effect independent warlords, and shared to a greater or lesser degree a number of leadership traits. These included personal bravery; the ability to be brutal when necessary; strategic and tactical prowess; the ability to communicate with audiences high and low; that most Roman of traits, grit, which meant they kept coming back; the charisma to inspire on a large scale; and decisiveness. Caesar was the only one who had them all, and because of this he was the warlord who was the most constantly, and conspicuously, successful. That is why I believe he was Rome's greatest warlord.

Had Caesar been captured what would Pompey's options have been? And his most likely course of action?

That is a very good question. I believe Pompey would have liked to be merciful to his rival. The destruction of a political opponent was a grave matter in the world of Republican Rome. Note, for example, Caesar's fury when he learnt that Pompey had been beheaded on arrival in Ptolemaic Egypt after fleeing the defeat at Pharsalus. However, on the eve of that battle Pompey knew he had been bested by the arriviste Caesar, the latter in particular making his name in his dramatic and sanguineous conquests of Gaul. Caesar's aggressive strategy against the optimates certainly put his rivals on the back foot. Further, while Caesar was far and away the leading populares champion, Pompey was more of a first among equals. This proved to be the case after his death when the optimates cause continued in further civil war until 45 BCE. Therefore, I think Pompey's hands would have been tied. Much as he would

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Main image sources: © Alamy

RIGHT
Julius Caesar would become a dictator whose dynasty started an empire

RIGHT-INSET
Pompey The Great was a stalwart of the Republic

What if…
POMPEY HAD DEFEATED JULIUS CAESAR?

THE PAST

60s & 50s BCE

DRIVEN BY AMBITION

Both Caesar and Pompey were successful, seasoned campaigners in battle, and that would both bring them together and drive them apart. Success in war had gained them wealth and the respect of the people, which in turn gave them the platform for the political ambition and eventually rivalry that was to drive them towards their individual fate.

60-53 BCE

THE TRIUMVIRATE

To further their own ends within the Senate, Caesar and Pompey formed a private alliance with the fabulously wealthy Marcus Crassus, known to us as the First Triumvirate (60-53 BCE). Through such political manoeuvring, Caesar became Consul and as a result all three increased their power and influence. But the alliance was a troubled one and following the death of Crassus in a military campaign, plus the death of Julia (Caesar's daughter and Pompey's wife) relations between the two remaining allies were stretched to the limit and the triumvirate came to an end.

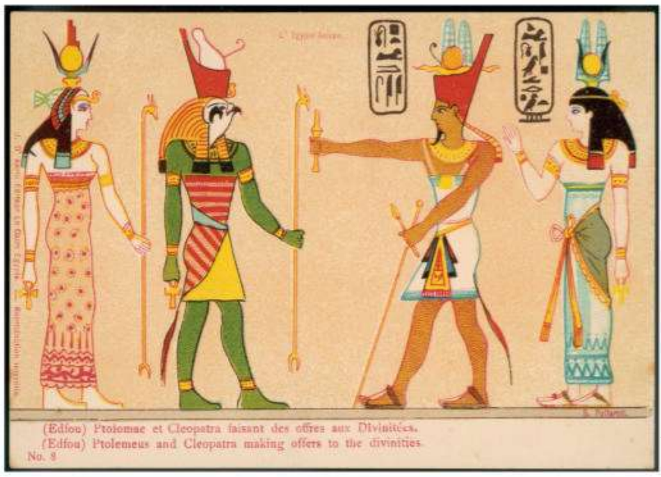
Image source: wiki/Mary Harrsch (CC BY-SA 4.0)

49 BCE

CAESAR CROSSES THE RUBICON

Roman law forbade any military leader from crossing into Italy with a standing army. Following further successful military campaigns, in 49 BCE Caesar took the ultimate step of crossing the Rubicon River, which formed the northern boundary of Italian territory, without disbanding his legions, in defiance of the Senate. It was an open act of treason from Caesar, resulting in civil war and leading Caesar and Pompey to the inevitable clash at the Battle of Pharsalus.

Image source: wiki/Jacob Abbott


(Edfou) Ptolomae et Cleopatra faisant des offres aux Divinités.
(Edfou) Ptolemeus and Cleopatra making offers to the divinities.
No. 8

5x © Alamy

ABOVE Pompey's alliance with Ptolemy XIII could have grown even stronger

have liked to have kept Caesar alive, perhaps as an exile, he knew that his fellow optimates expected his opponent to be killed – an event that would have secured victory for the optimates.

What role would Pompey have seen for himself in Rome and how would he have secured it?

If Pompey had defeated Caesar I don't believe he would have had the option of setting himself up as a dictator for life as Caesar had done, given he was the leading optimates rather than their actual – individual – leader. He would have championed a return to the normal Republican Roman status quo, with annual elections for twin consuls, though of course occasionally he himself would have put himself forward as one!

What would a Pompey victory have meant for the likes of Mark Antony, Cleopatra and Octavian? And what effect would this have on history?

They would have become footnotes in history. Mark Antony, while successful in the final stages of the 1st century BCE civil wars in Rome, was no Caesar. Though a skilful political operator, he would likely have perished soon after Caesar's defeat. Meanwhile the optimates broadly favoured Cleopatra VII's rival for political power in Alexandria, her brother Ptolemy XIII. While unquestionably a powerful ruler in her own right, without Caesar and later Antony championing her cause Cleopatra would most likely have been just another ruler in the long line of squabbling Ptolemaic monarchs. Similarly, Octavian owed his later elevation to Caesar championing him as the latter reached the ascendancy of his domination of Roman political life. Without that elevation, and given his family association with Caesar and the populares, he again would most likely have either been killed or disappeared into obscurity.

Would the influence of the Roman world in size and culture have been different after a Pompey victory? If so, how?

Not necessarily. By the time of Pharsalus, Rome was easily the dominant power in the western and eastern Mediterranean worlds, with no symmetrical opponent left except perhaps the Parthians in the east. To that end, Rome was already far down the road of assimilating Greek, Egyptian and Punic culture into its own way of life. Furthermore, even if Caesar had been defeated, his optimates

BELOW The Battle of Pharsalus saw Julius Caesar defeat Pompey the Great

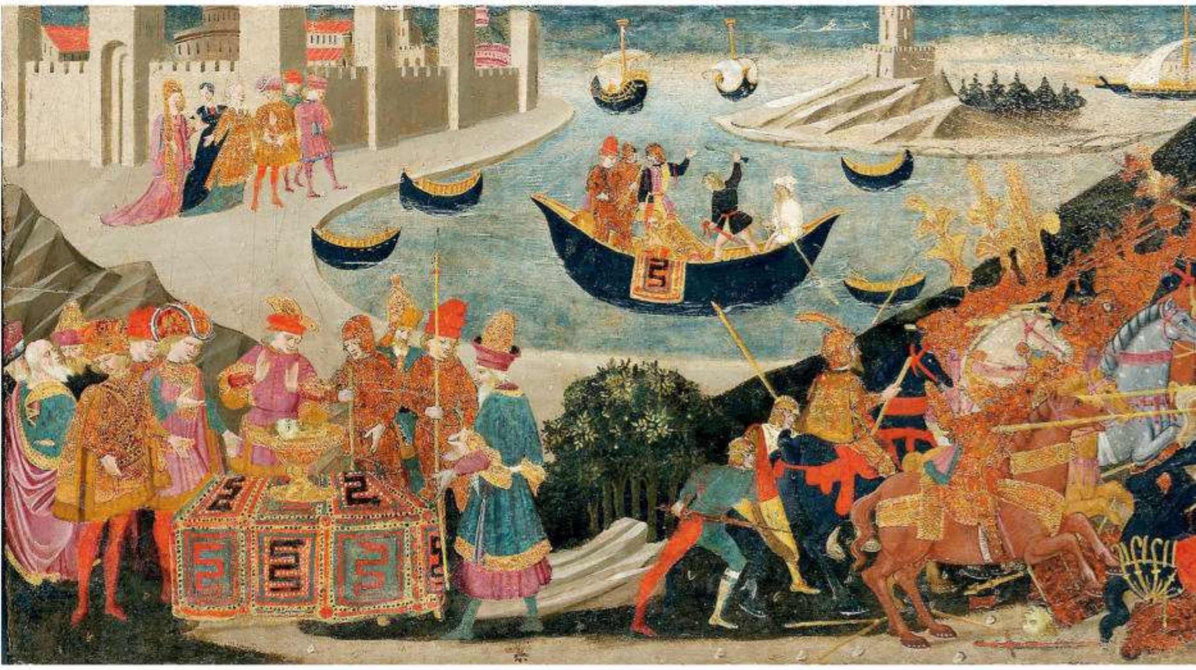
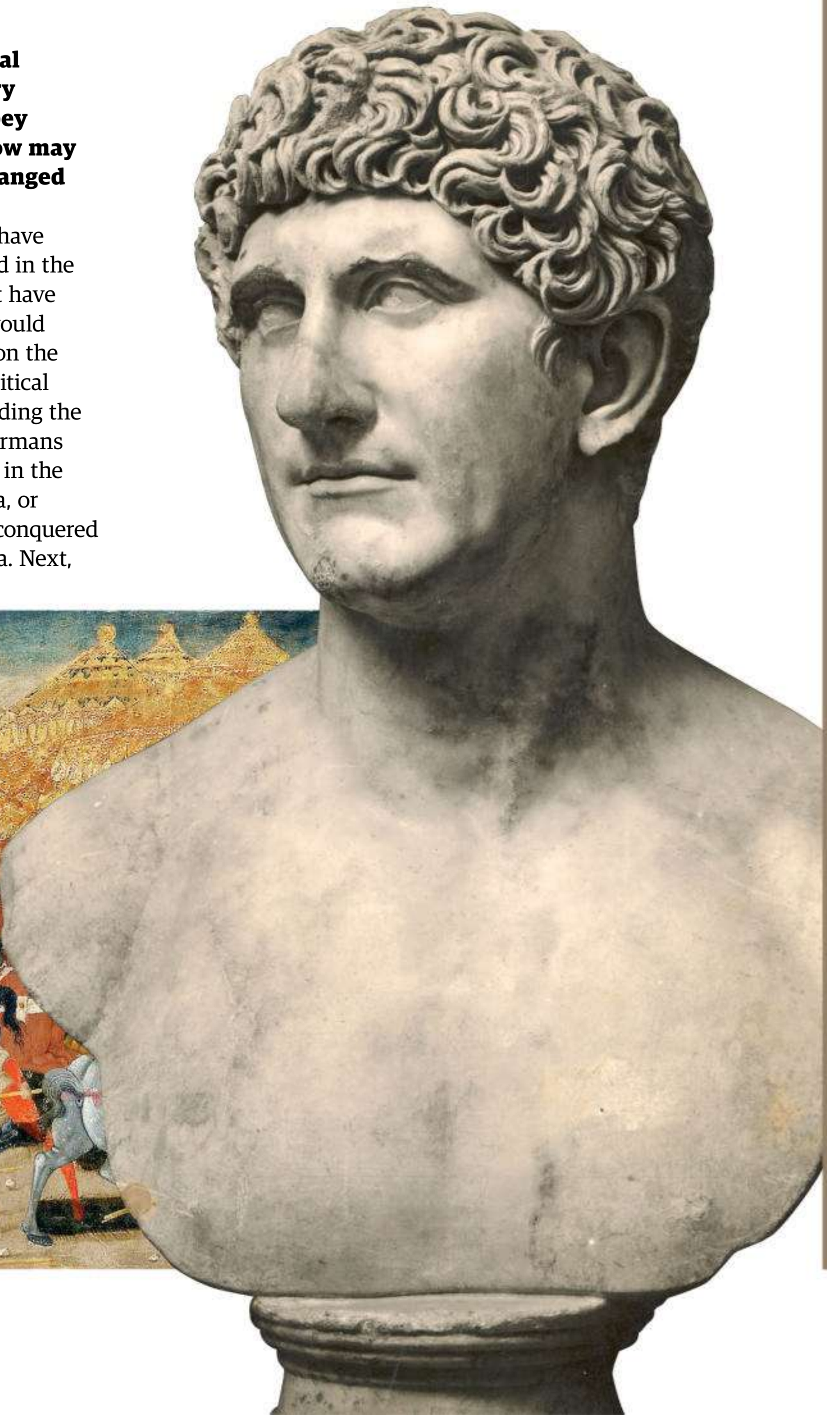


Image source: wiki/Art Institute of Chicago (CC0 1.0) opponents would still have had the same desire to expand Roman influence even further afield.

Would Rome have still become an Empire if Pompey had won?
Possibly, but later. While the Republic would most likely have continued in the short term, as I have explained, Rome was now the conqueror of all it surveyed. Therefore, any significant conflict would most likely have come in a new round of civil wars, though perhaps somewhat later than actually happened. In that context, there is no reason to think another populares strongman might have emerged to later take on Caesar's mantle of reform for the Republic. A victory then for this warlord would then perhaps, as happened in reality, have set in place the path to Empire.

What three specific historical events would have been very different because of a Pompey victory over Caesar? And how may subsequent history have changed because of them?
The Roman Empire would not have come into being at the time and in the way it did, even if later it might have appeared in some form. That would then have had a direct impact on the development of the various political entities geographically surrounding the world of Rome, whether the Germans north of the Danube, Parthians in the east, Numidians in North Africa, or Spaniards in the remaining unconquered regions of the Iberian Peninsula. Next, it was Caesar who put Britain on the Roman map with his two incursions in 55 BCE and 54 BCE. Without his interest there perhaps Roman engagement may have withered, instead of Augustus planning though cancelling three invasions, Caligula likewise cancelling one, and ultimately Claudius invading in force in 43 CE to set up the province of Britannia. Finally, Caesar has been the inspiration for political and military leaders ever since his dramatic Icarus-like ascent and ultimate demise. In modern times we still style autocratic leaders in his image, for example think Slavic Tsars and German Kaisers. Perhaps a failure on his part at Pharsalus might have encouraged those who sought (and seek) power at the end of the sword to think again. But probably not!



BELOW
Caesar's ally Mark Antony may not have survived a Pompey victory

THE POSSIBILITY

55-54 BCE

ROMAN BRITAIN WIPED FROM HISTORY?

Caesar's minor explorations of Britain and his interest in expanding into the country may well have died with him at Pharsalus. With the possibility of Pompey taking Roman expansion in a completely different direction, the unknown territory may well have stayed untouched by Rome. No Hadrian's Wall, no Roman roads, no villas and no Roman culture that was to have a lasting effect on the development of the British people.

69-30 BCE

CLEOPATRA WHO?

As the victor, rather than being killed in Egypt at the orders of Ptolemy, Pompey may have strengthened their alliance. It would mean a very different future for Ptolemy's sister and joint ruler, Cleopatra. As Ptolemy's enemy she would be Pompey's enemy, ending in obscurity or death. Her mythical beauty would never have been celebrated, and her famous love affair (and child) with Caesar and later Mark Antony, ending in her suicide, would never have happened.

44 BCE

A VERY DIFFERENT DYNASTY

Julius Caesar was the first of a new order in Rome with ultimate power in the hands of one man. Despite his assassination and the consequent civil war his line endured through his adopted son Octavian (Caesar Augustus). But Pompey was much more of a republican, and a dynastic dictatorship through a line of emperors may possibly never have happened. There would be no Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula or Claudius. Whether there had been an emperor or a republic, events would've shaped the empire very differently.

Image source: wiki/ S. I. Sosnovsky (CC BY-SA 4.0) [translated]

ROMMEL HAD WON IN NORTH AFRICA?

The Nazi commander failed to hold off the Allies, but could an Axis victory have changed the course of World War II?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Ken Delve

Ken Delve

Ken Delve is a military historian and former RAF navigator. He is the author of *Disaster in the Desert*, which explores what could have happened if Rommel had won in North Africa and swept into Egypt.

In 1941, Erwin Rommel (who came to be known as the 'Desert Fox') had been given control of Germany's North Africa Korps. In a short period of time he had managed to achieve a staggering number of victories against the Allies. Despite this, the North African front appeared to be of secondary importance to the German high command compared to the brutal battles occurring on the Eastern Front. A critical supply issue would result in a number of back-and-forth battles and would eventually prove to be Rommel's undoing. However, historian Ken Delve argues that had Rommel achieved victory, and swept into the Middle East, then WWII could have turned out very differently...

What was the situation in North Africa in 1942?

In 1940 there had been the failure of the Allied Crusader Offensive. They entered the north in November 1941 and, despite starting with great promise, by spring 1942 everything had gone badly wrong and had developed into a back-and-forth, which was symptomatic of the desert war. If during an offensive you out-reached your supply lines you were under threat because the enemy is then able to get enough supplies [of their own]. The enemy then goes on the offensive and you have to roll back hundreds of miles. Rommel's offensive started very well and was able to hold the line and resupply, forcing the Allies back into Egypt. By summer 1942 there was a distinct threat that the Germans and Italians would take Egypt.

How close at this point was Rommel to victory?

It's an interesting one, because you never quite know if the Allied commanders were as bad as some people make them out to be. There were some phenomenally good Allied ground troops. The vast majority of squadrons deployed in the war [in North Africa] were not actually British troops but were colonial groups. And although Rommel did look quite close he was so over-stretched that the chances of him actually succeeding in getting through to take Cairo and the Suez Canal were pretty slim because of the integration of his supply lines.

Ultimately, what caused Rommel's defeat in North Africa?

What really caused the defeat of Rommel was a lack of supply, because he was relying on bringing everything across the Mediterranean. If you could interrupt those supply lines, he would have no tanks, no men and no fuel. So the failure to bring supplies, especially fuel, was really the death knell of Rommel's campaign and that was largely down to air [power]. 39th Squadron played a large part in that, and was known as the 'Ship Busters'. Rommel needed to neutralise this from North Africa, but especially from Malta, and the key failure was Rommel not neutralising Malta. From the Allies' point of view, when a new tanker was sailing every effort was made to sink it and as a result every single oil tanker was sunk.

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RIGHT
German armoured forces in the desert of North Africa

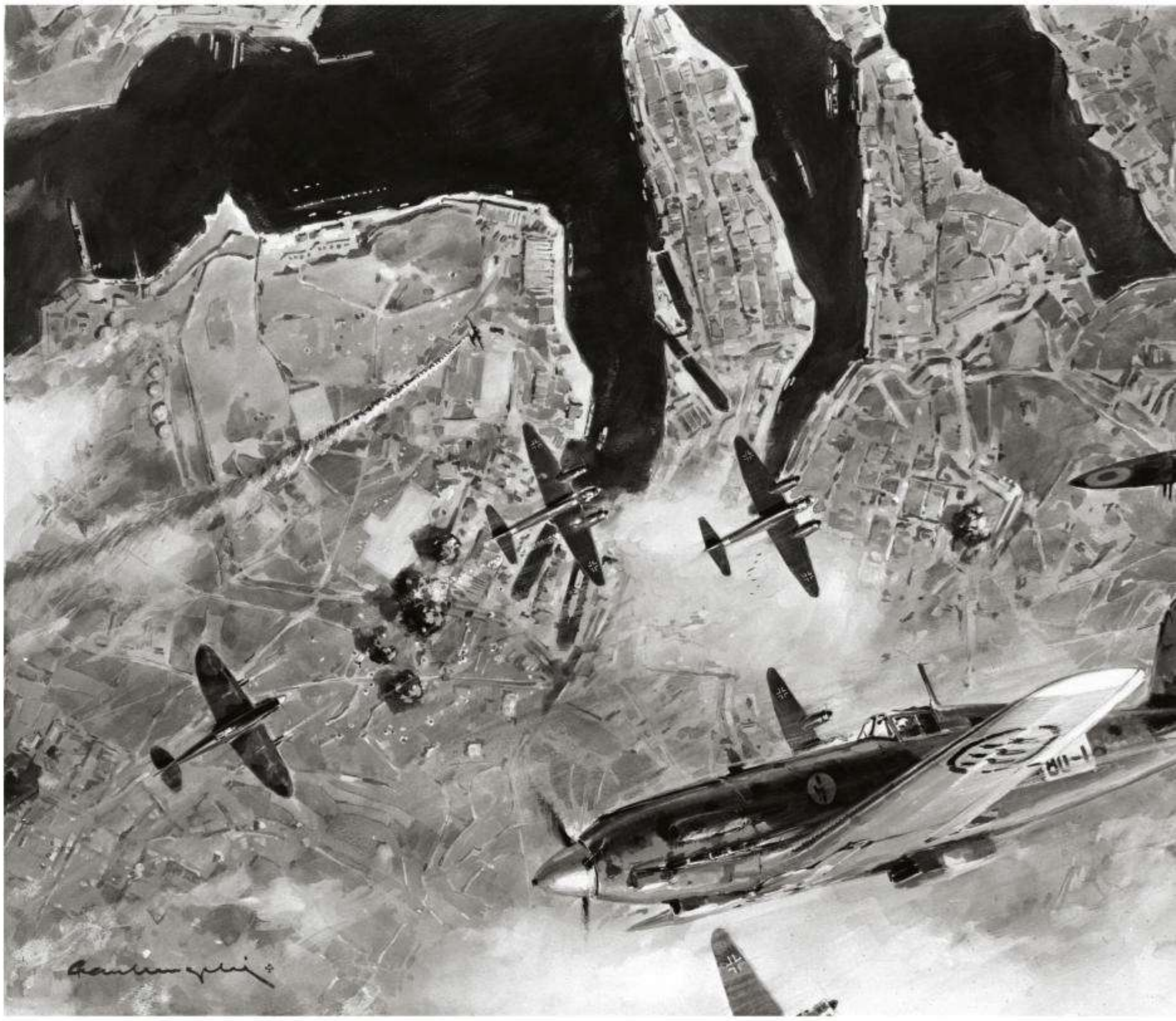
Main image source: © Alamy, © Getty Images

How close was a possible Axis victory in North Africa?

Primarily they would have to have taken Malta. If Malta had fallen then it would have been easier for the Axis forces to move their fuel, their munitions and everything else across. The Italians often got a bad press, but they worked hard supplying ships and personnel to try to drive the supplies across. It's just that the Allies were very good at disrupting them. There were plans for an assault on Malta, but for whatever reason the decision was taken by the Axis forces not to push forward. It is possible that the invasion of Crete [in May 1941] had had an impact. Also, the Axis forces were having to move air power from theatre to theatre. So when the Axis powers made an impact in North Africa they achieved this by taking air power out of Russia and removing it when it was needed for the Eastern Front. In terms of air power, the Axis from 1940 onwards was robbing Peter to pay Paul.

If Operation Torch (the Anglo-US invasion of northwest Africa) had failed, what would've been the impact?

It's an interesting one. When you look at alternate history, you say: "Yes, it would have an impact because you've now got the Germans having to fight on two fronts." They did remarkably well for a while but [Bernard] Montgomery's offensive in El Alamein pushed Rommel back far enough to be able to counter the attack in North Africa. Montgomery was an incredibly slow mover and incredibly cautious, which allowed Rommel to play with two fronts for a while. However, there is an argument that says the Allies would probably still have won anyway. That's because all of the airfields captured on the North African side where Operation Torch was involved didn't make a lot of difference anyway. However, because of Torch the Germans moved a lot of different forces into North Africa. The main impact of Torch was that it was a blooding for the Americans and a blooding for the combined command structure. A lot of the failings of politics, personalities and tactics were hammered out in North Africa and made the D-Day assault more effective. When you look at the command structure for D-Day, it was



THE PAST

1891

BECOMING THE DESERT FOX

Erwin Rommel was born on 15 November 1891. He joined the military in 1910 and fought in WWI. When WWII began he was placed in charge of the troops who protected Hitler. In February 1940, Rommel took command of the 7th Armoured Panzer Division and proved his abilities with a victory on France's Channel Coast. He was nicknamed the Desert Fox after his initial successes commanding the Africa Korps in the North African desert.

MAY – JUNE 1941

THE BATTLE OF CRETE

Germany mounted an ambitious airborne and amphibious assault on the strategically vital island. The operation was a disaster for the British but also resulted in over 3,000 German fatalities. Despite the Nazis' success on Crete the casualty rate may have resulted in Hitler's reluctance to press ahead with an invasion of Malta.

OCTOBER 1944

THE DEATH OF ROMMEL

Following defeat in North Africa, Rommel was moved to Northern France in order to defend against a possible Allied invasion. Here the commander began to lose faith in both Hitler and the direction of the war, and he doubted Germany's chances of victory. Rommel was approached by a group of conspirators who discussed the possibility of a new German government, led by him. However, the conspirators failed to reveal to him that they planned to remove Hitler from power through assassination. When Hitler discovered Rommel's links to the failed 1944 July Plot to kill him Rommel was offered a choice: trial or suicide. He chose the latter and took cyanide capsules.

ABOVE
A German soldier surrenders during the Battle of El Alamein

ABOVE-INSET
Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery, who led the Allies to victory in North Africa

LEFT
German bombers attack the port of Valletta, Malta. The island was used by the Allies to launch attacks against Nazi supply ships

the command structure from North Africa. So the likes of Dwight D Eisenhower, Montgomery, they all moved across having learned lessons in North Africa.

What would have been the immediate aftermath of a victory in North Africa for Rommel?

If Rommel had taken Malta and received the supplies he needed and driven into Egypt, Torch would not have happened. If the Suez Canal had fallen, Rommel could have swung up through the oil fields in Iraq and essentially the Allies would've lost their major source of oil. Of course, this would've meant the Germans getting a bigger supply of oil. If the Germans had taken those Iraqi oil fields, they could've moved into Iran and into the soft underbelly of Russia where they could've join up with Axis forces and provided them with oil as well. One of the primary downfalls of the German forces was lack of oil. Germany did an amazingly good job with creating synthetic oil products but it's not the same. The intensity of attacks on oil targets in Europe were such that their production rates were minimal. If they had been able to capture oil facilities in the Middle East, and then in the Russian areas as well, for example Romania, it would have made a huge difference. The Allied collapse in North Africa would have led to the collapse of the whole of that area. The Allies would not have been able to hold that area.

Could that then have altered the course of the war?

Definitely. Oil is such an important aspect of it because the Axis forces could have then joined their Middle East forces with their forces in Russia and that could have seen the Russians collapse. With North Africa having been lost the Allies would have found it very hard to get it back. If they'd lost Egypt and the Suez Canal the question is would the Allies still have gone ahead with an attack in North Africa to try to divide the Axis forces? Would they have tried to assault Egypt from basically their bases in India and Africa? The loss of the Middle East would have been a massive loss of British prestige. Winston Churchill pointed out that one reason the Allies fought pretty hard not to lose the Middle East was because if certain countries saw we were not able to protect it, those countries could've possibly changed sides or not supported the Allies.

Is it fair to suggest that if Rommel had won in North Africa, the Germans could have won WWII?

I think so. I mean, you have to talk about how strategic bombing played a part. And remember – the Allies having won in North Africa as well as the invasion of Italy meant they could now attack southern Germany and Austria from air bases around Bosnia and Italy. Their strategic bombing campaign was now increased against Germany itself. If the Axis had held all of that, the Italians would not have left the Axis side and integral strategic bombing would have been minimised. We may have even seen the Americans say: "That's all too little too late and let's not brother." That's why I think Churchill was right to dig in his heels with the Americans. The Americans did not want a Mediterranean campaign. They wanted the Allies to focus all their attention on going into Europe, but that was wrong. So I think the Allies eventually winning in the Middle East was crucial to the Allies winning the war, and therefore the converse is also true.

THE POSSIBILITY

1941

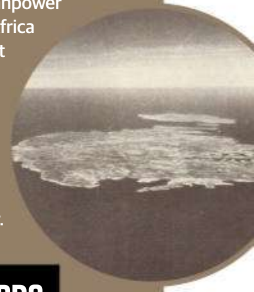
THE IMPORTANCE OF OIL

Rashid Gaylani took control of the kingdom of Iraq in 1941 with assistance from both Germany and Italy. Due to Allied concerns that the country's crucial oil fields might be about to fall into the hands of the Axis powers, Britain waged a 30-day war and toppled his regime. This nonetheless highlighted the importance of oil. Had Rommel been able to push into Iraq and seize its oil fields, the outcome of WWII may have been very different.

1942

OPERATION HERKULES

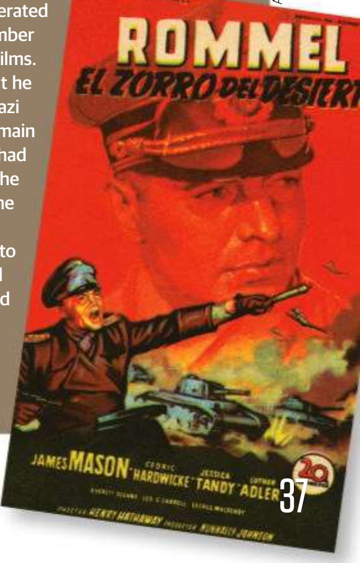
Herkules was a planned operation for the capture of the islands of Malta and Gozo to secure Axis supply lines to North Africa. But Nazi casualties sustained during the Battle of Crete led Hitler to cancel this plan in November 1942. The manpower was instead sent to North Africa to assist Rommel's forces at his request. However, had the islands been captured it is possible that Rommel may have had the supplies necessary to defeat the Allies in North Africa and change the course of the war.



1945 ONWARDS

ROMMEL MYTH

The Rommel Myth is the idea that he was a noble leader and military genius who was uncommitted to Nazi ideology. The idea has been proliferated through a number of books and films. To what extent he believed in Nazi ideology will remain unknown, but had the course of the war differed the question has to be raised as to whether Allied politicians would have viewed him as the supposedly 'good German'.



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What if...

THE TITANIC HAD NOT SUNK?

She was the largest, most luxurious and supposedly safest ship afloat, but her loss was to change the course of history

INTERVIEW WITH

© Dr Aidan McMichael

Dr Aidan McMichael

Aidan is based in Belfast and is chairman of the Belfast Titanic Society, and co-edits its magazine. He is also chair of a monthly society talk programme to an international Titanic audience.

Even before a single rivet had been hammered into place, RMS Titanic was destined for fame. Her owners, the White Star Line, ignored competitor Cunard's boasts of speed. Instead, they focussed on opulence and luxury to carry passengers from all walks of life across the Atlantic towards the American Dream. Titanic was the largest moving man-made object in the world, and public interest and expectation matched her colossal size. White Star staked its reputation on the ship – all Titanic had to do now was deliver on that promise.

What different events, circumstances or decisions prior to and during the voyage may have avoided disaster?

It is possible to see events around the Titanic as a gathering perfect storm. No one single thing may have been enough to either cause or avoid disaster, but with each event the pendulum swung further against Titanic and the odds of survival became stacked against her.

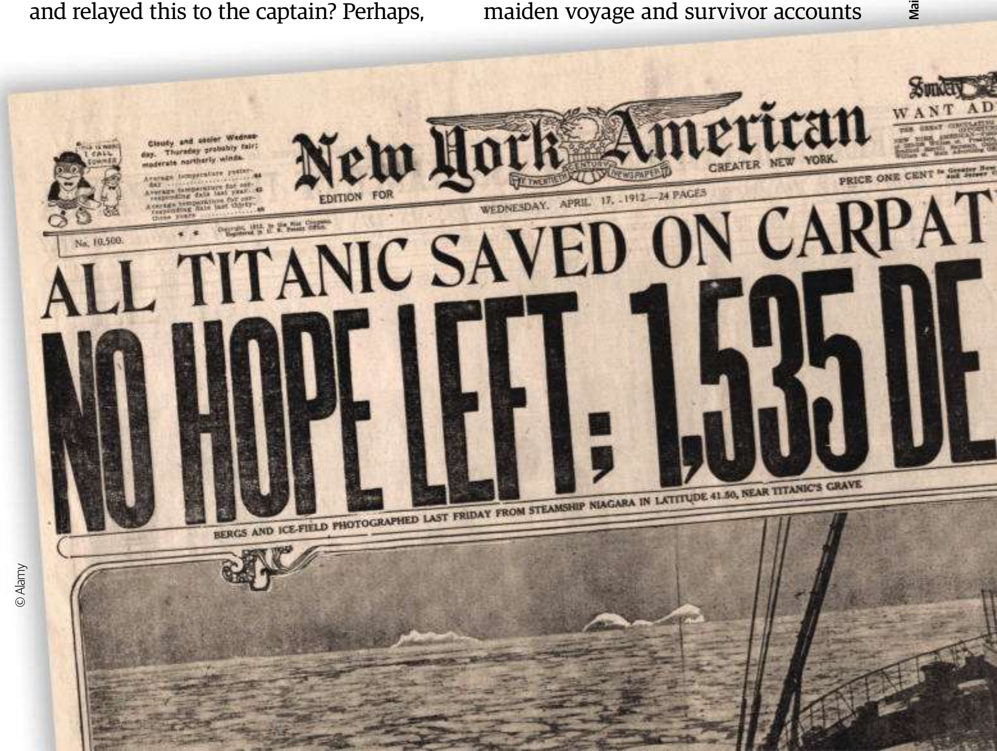
It is in many ways a whole series of 'what ifs'. If Titanic's sister ship Olympic had not ludicrously collided with HMS Hawke in 1911 and needed repairing, taking workers away from the Titanic and delaying her completion, would she have sailed sooner and avoided her fate? If the fire that raged in one of her coal bunkers from the very start of the voyage had been put out sooner would there have been minimum damage to the bulkhead, leaving it more secure? If Captain Edward Smith had been more cautious after his collision on the Olympic with the navy ship instead of overly confident in the potential 'unsinkability' of the ships, would he have acted differently when captain of the Titanic? Would he have been more reserved with the speed of the vessel and its ability to react to danger? And then there are things which were always beyond the control of the captain and the White Star Line. The unusual weather in the Arctic in 1911 would lead to a larger volume of sea ice and, in particular, icebergs, protected for greater distances in a flow of cold Arctic water that pushed down towards the Gulf Stream. Not only were there more of them, but they were potentially bigger and more deadly to ships of all sizes, even the largest in the world. And what if, instead of handling countless personal messages for passengers, the operators in the radio room had heeded the warnings from other vessels in the area of the threat of sea ice and relayed this to the captain? Perhaps, despite the loss of face and reputation such a delay [from slowing down] would've caused, disaster could have been averted.

How important would Titanic have been to the growth of competitive trans-Atlantic travel?

Titanic, if she had survived, would have made the White Star Line a robust challenger to its rival Cunard and other shipping lines servicing the lucrative and busy North Atlantic run. Like all market competitors making money would have meant selling highly profitable rooms in Titanic's 1st class decks and ensuring they could max out on her 3rd class capacity. Competition, then as now, was regarded as healthy, driving innovation in technology and service improvement for passengers. From what we hear of her maiden voyage and survivor accounts

Main image source: © Getty Images

RIGHT
News soon spread around the globe at the huge loss of life



Cloudy and cooler Wednesday. Thursday probably fair; moderate northerly winds.

New York American

EDITION FOR GREATER NEW YORK.

WANT AD

PRICE ONE CENT

No. 10,500.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 1912—24 PAGES

ALL TITANIC SAVED ON CARPAT

NO HOPE LEFT; 1,535 DE

BERGS AND ICE-FIELD PHOTOGRAPHED LAST FRIDAY FROM STEAMSHIP NIAGARA IN LATITUDE 41.50, NEAR TITANIC'S GRAVE

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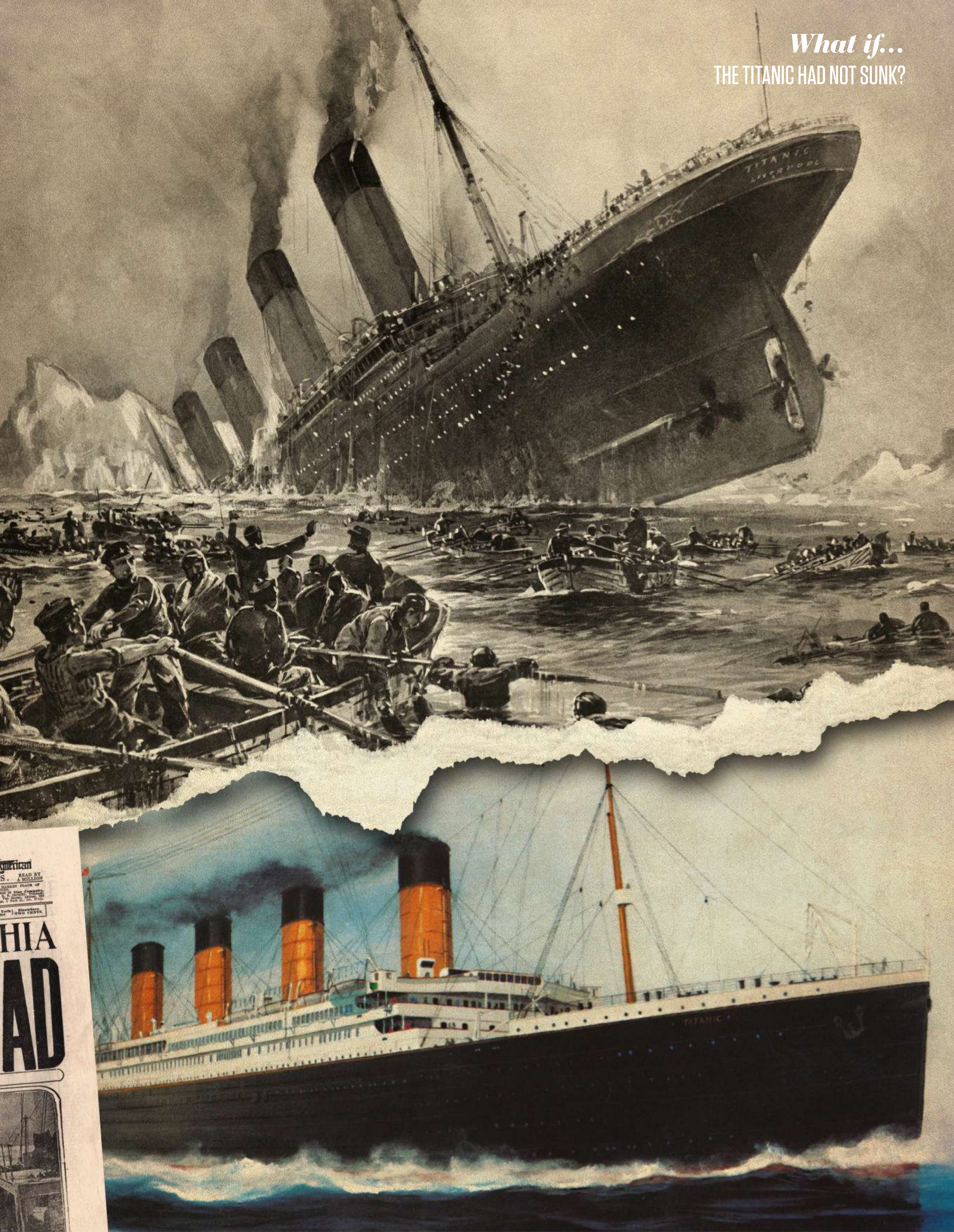

TITANIC
LIVERPOOL
American
READ BY A MILLION
HIA
AD
TITANIC

THE PAST

1912

TIME FOR LUXURY

Having opted out of the speed race for crossing the Atlantic, White Star Line concentrated on luxury and the comfort of its passengers. The Olympic and Titanic were fitted to the highest standards, and not just for the wealthy. It was noted by 3rd class passengers that the facilities and finish below decks were far from basic and much more comfortable that many of White Star's competitors. Such an investment by White Star was not a coincidence: the rush to find new opportunities in the New World made 3rd class a very profitable enterprise for the company.

1911

LATE TO THE PARTY

It is ironic that the captain of Titanic, Edward Smith, was responsible for causing the delay of the ship's completion while he was captain of Titanic's sister vessel Olympic. Having collided with a navy warship following a botched manoeuvre by Smith, Olympic's repairs diverted workers away from Titanic's construction and delayed the completion and launch of the vessel. Such a change in plan placed the much-advertised maiden voyage of the world's largest ocean liner – and White Star's reputation – in jeopardy. It also dramatically changed the timings of her voyage, putting her in the wrong place at the wrong time.

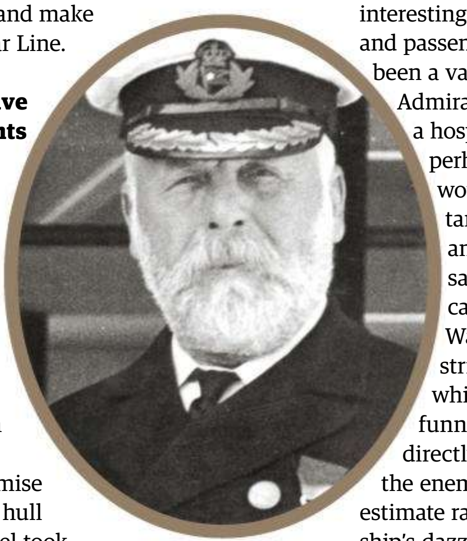
1912

STAY OFF THE AIR

By 1912 the modern innovation of wireless was being used on trans-Atlantic crossings, and Titanic was no exception. The novelty for passengers was to send messages to friends and loved-ones ashore. The operators, who were paid by the wireless manufacturer Marconi, were overwhelmed. The closest vessel to Titanic, the SS Californian, messaged a warning of sea ice, only to be told to get off the air so more lucrative private messages could be sent. Following Titanic's radio distress signal, picked up by the Carpathia at 1.45am on 15 April, the last message from Titanic was: "Come as quickly as possible, old man, the engine room is filling up to the boilers."

of the days before the disaster, Titanic had surpassed 1st class passenger expectations, so she was indeed set to build a great service reputation and make money for her owners White Star Line.

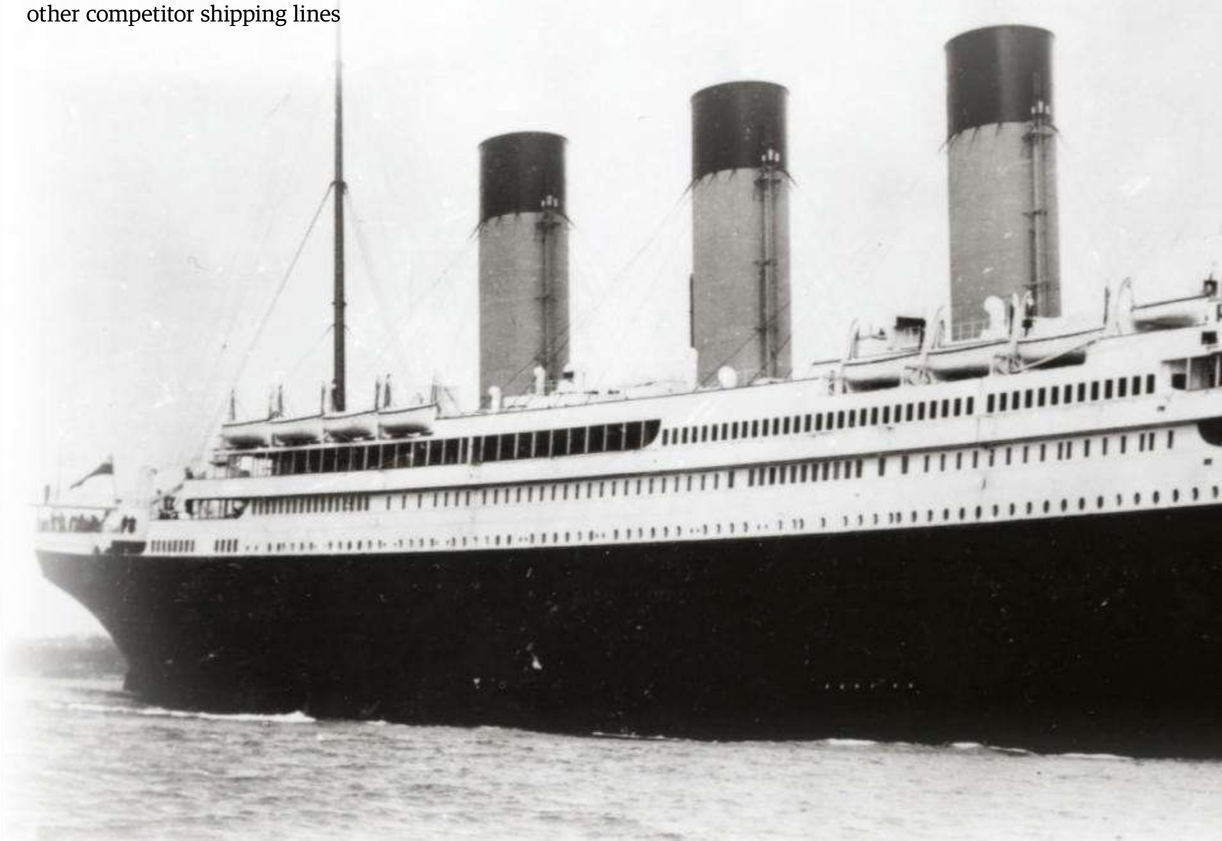
How influential could she have been to promote developments in shipbuilding design?
Olympic was the actual flagship of the Olympic class – Titanic, her new sister and completed around a year later – was almost identical so her design features had already been showcased and marketed. This included the system of watertight compartments – 16 in all – which ran the length of the ship and were designed to minimise the threat of sinking even if the hull had been breached and the vessel took on water. Each compartment had a watertight door which could be closed manually, electronically from the bridge, or by a float switch should all else fail. Titanic was designed to take on water in up to four of these compartments without sinking. There was also one key feature that was different on Titanic compared with Olympic. Passengers on the North Atlantic crossing reported that they were cold while out strolling on their private deck. Harland & Wolff, the ship builder, listened to that feedback and introduced a partially enclosed deck – a good example of meeting your customers' expectations! No doubt this innovation and her luxurious interiors, had she survived, would have been copied and imitated by other competitor shipping lines



Captain Edward Smith was to perish aboard his ship

What kind of First World War would she have had?
Undoubtedly Titanic would have had an interesting World War I due to her size and passenger capacity. She would have been a valuable resource for the British Admiralty possibly as a troop carrier, a hospital ship or a cargo carrier; and perhaps her pre-war reputation would have made her a prime target and propaganda trophy to any German U-boat. To operate safely she would have been camouflaged – a popular World War I camouflage was 'dazzle' – stripes in various shades of black, white and grey painted over decks, funnels and sides. Dazzle did not directly conceal a ship but ensured the enemy would find it difficult to estimate range, speed and heading. Each ship's dazzle patterns were unique to avoid making classes of ships instantly recognisable to the enemy. What would seafarers have made of seeing Titanic in dazzle camo?

What do you think would have been her final fate and why?
Like Titanic's sister ship Olympic, and like all great liners of their day, she would most likely have been sent to the breakers yard as scrap. The great Atlantic liners were always updated and replaced as technology advanced – later, for example, there was a move away from coal burning to new diesel technology with cleaner and more efficient engines requiring fewer crew and therefore saving money. Olympic was scrapped in 1929 and we



can take a guess Titanic would have been scrapped a year later in 1930 had she survived. One wonders, therefore, with the materials saved from the scrapping of Titanic, would there be hotels and bars with wood panelling from Titanic's opulent smoking room?

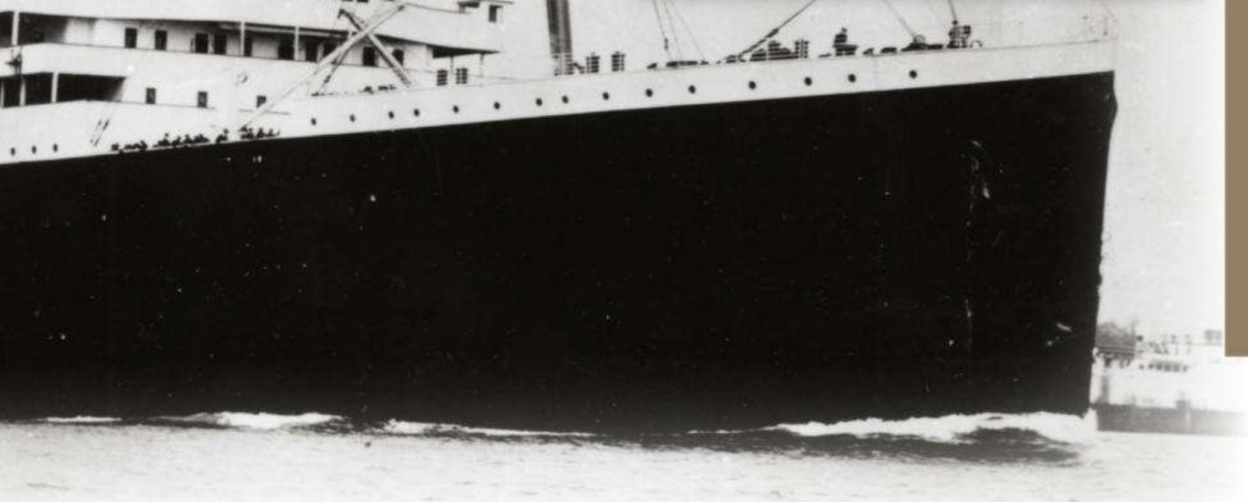
What changes in maritime safety happened because of the disaster? Changes that may have been hindered or never happened if Titanic hadn't sunk?
There are a number of key technology and safety features that may not have happened as early as 1912, including lifeboat numbers and wider use of radio at sea. The founding of the International Ice Patrol in the North Atlantic was most likely brought forward by the Titanic disaster. The scale of the disaster created sufficient public support on both sides of the Atlantic to prompt a working-together approach which lead to the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) convention in 1914. This led to the founding of the ice patrol run by the US Coastguard, which continues to provide information and iceberg warnings for shipping. Countless lives lost through iceberg incidents have been avoided all because of the Titanic tragedy.

Jack Phillips, Titanic's wireless operator, remained at his post and perished

Who on board may have had an influence on history, even in a small way, had they survived?
All the people on board Titanic on the night of 15 April 1912 were 'ordinary people who were about to lead extraordinary lives'. There were many American industrialists whose death it may be said would have some influence on their businesses and in turn the economy. In addition, one individual in particular, Archibald Butt (26 September 1865 – 15 April 1912), was a US Army officer and a journalist. Crucially he provided service to two US Presidents during his career: Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft. At one stage Butt was Taft's de facto chief negotiator on Federal budget issues. Previously he had been Roosevelt's closest companion while in office. Being such an influential character in the life of these US presidents one wonders would the course of history in the USA or even the world have been different if Butt had lived? Would Butt have helped maintain relations with Roosevelt and perhaps prevented Roosevelt's direct challenge to Taft – the founding of the Progressive Party which split the vote and thereby allowed Woodrow Wilson to be elected? Now that would have changed history!

BELOW
Titanic was to be the pride of the White Star Line

BELOW-INSET
Titanic survivors photographed from the rescue ship Carpathia

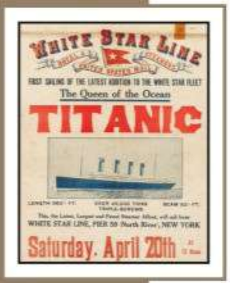


THE POSSIBILITY

1912-30

THE QUEEN OF THE OCEAN

If Titanic had survived her maiden voyage she would have dominated the trans-Atlantic passenger trade. What she would not have been able to avoid was World War I, and she would've been a prime target for German U-boats. After WWI she would have continued to transport passengers from all walks of life to and fro across the Atlantic for many years to come, with the comfort and reliability that the White Star Line prided itself upon.


WHITE STAR LINE
FIRST SAILING OF THE LATEST ADDITION TO THE WHITE STAR FLEET
The Queen of the Ocean
TITANIC
WHITE STAR LINE, PIER 59 North River, NEW YORK
Saturday, April 20th

1912-30

TAKE OFF DELAYED

The first flight by the Wright brothers preceded Titanic by only nine years, and yet by her maiden voyage aircraft innovation had changed dramatically. However distance, size and cost were to keep commercial passenger-carrying aircraft very much a dream until at least two decades after Titanic sank. Had she survived, she would've definitely played a part in meeting the needs of mass transportation around the world, a scale of demand that could not have been met by even the most ambitious airline.

1912 – PRESENT

AMERICAN HEART AND MUSCLE

There were a number of high-ranking, high-flying and influential American industrialists and businessmen who died in the disaster. Had they survived, they would surely have continued to influence and drive the economy and infrastructure of the United States in its evolution as a world-leading economic power. The richest on board was John Jacob Astor, but the list of those lost includes railway executives, a mining magnate, a steel magnate and Isidor and Ida Straus – owners of Macy's department stores. But most passengers were ordinary people and we can only guess at how, had they lived, they may have in their own way changed the world.

All images: © Alamy

What if...

BOUDICCA'S REVOLUTION HAD SUCCEEDED?

In 60-61 CE the queen of the Iceni tribe led a bloody rebellion that very nearly ended the Roman occupation of Britain

INTERVIEW WITH

© Dr Simon Elliott

Dr Simon Elliott

Dr Elliott is a bestselling author, historian, archaeologist and broadcaster, with books such as *Roman Conquests: Britain*. In June 2022 he leads his week-long tour 'Boudicca: Heroic Queen of Britannia' for Hidden History Travel.

At the time of Boudicca, the Roman occupation of 'Britannia' was relatively new, but there was already a form of peace and mutual acceptance, even co-existence, with many of the native tribes, the Iceni included. But the tiger will always use its claws, and the opportunity for Rome to increase its wealth, territory and power after the death of Iceni king Prasutagus in c.60-61 CE was too good to miss. The resulting violence and dishonouring of the Iceni sparked a revolt against the Romans that would settle the balance of power in Britannia for centuries to come.

How were the Boudiccan rebels able to initially defeat the Romans in the revolt the queen led in c.60-61 CE?

At the heart of this answer is the specific time when the Boudiccan Revolt broke out. This was effectively the halfway point in the Roman campaigns of conquests in Britain in the 1st century CE. This had begun with the Claudian invasion in 43 CE under Aulus Plautius which, by the end of that year, had established the capital of the new province in modern Colchester. (Previously Camulodunum, capital of the native British Catuvellauni.) It ended with Agricola's final campaign around 83 CE when he defeated the Caledonians at the Battle of Mons Graupius in the Grampians, and then ordered the Classis Britannica regional fleet to circumnavigate the main island of Britain. As each stage of conquest moved forward step by step from southeast to northwest, the Romans set up a series of 'stop lines' to allow them to plan their next advance. Once ready, a new campaign then began. This is what was happening in the period immediately prior to the Boudiccan Revolt when, after a pause, the governor Gaius Suetonius Paulinus began a new campaign to subjugate the northwest of Wales. His eye was off the ball to his rear when, after the death of their client king Prasutagus, Roman mistreatment of his Iceni tribe in north Norfolk led to Prasutagus' widow Boudicca leading her revolt. The Romans were caught cold because their legions were deployed so far away: legio XIV Gemina and legio XX Valeria Victrix were with Paulinus, legio II Augusta was in Exeter, and legio IX Hispana in was southern Lincolnshire. In short, the Romans completely overplayed their hand in terms of civil government when trying to incorporate the territory of the Iceni into the province, and when things went badly for them they didn't have the available military resources to deal with the fall out.

How was Boudicca able to rally support for her cause?

Historians, ancient and modern, have often focused on the Iceni response to their disastrous rift with the Romans, but we should remember this was a new province, with the tribes of the south east subjugated longest. The nobility of the Trinovantes in southern modern Essex,

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Main image sources: © Alamy, © Getty Images

RIGHT
Governor Paulinus eventually defeated Boudicca and saved Rome's reputation

What if…

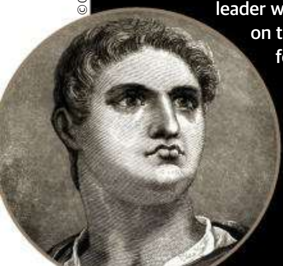
BOUDICCA'S REVOLUTION HAD SUCCEEDED?

THE PAST

C.60-61 CE

THE DEATH OF PRASUTAGUS

Even though he may have had good intentions, what the Iceni King Prasutagus actually left as his legacy was the spark that ignited a bloody revolt. By leaving his kingdom equally between his daughters and the Emperor Nero (pictured), the Iceni leader wished for his reign to live on through his offspring and for the co-existence with the Romans to continue. But Prasutagus' faith in the future and in the Romans was dreadfully misplaced, and the emperor and his governor in Britannia had other ideas.



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C.60-61 CE

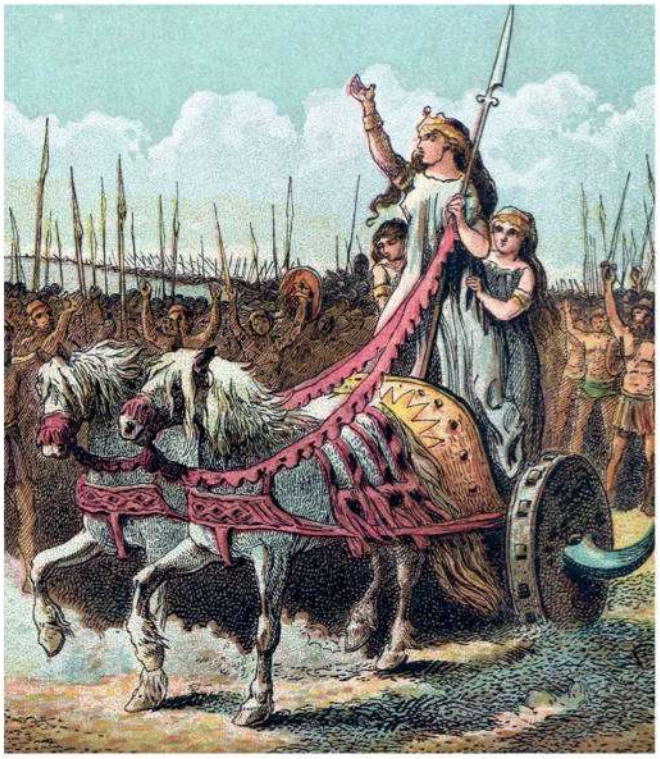
ROME SNATCHES IT ALL

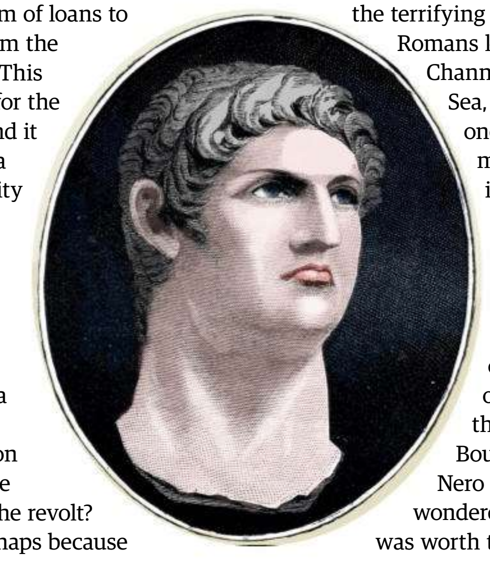
Not surprisingly, rather than comply with the wishes of the dead Iceni king, Rome decided to flex its considerable muscles and show who was boss. Simply ignoring the Iceni king's legacy, the Roman governor Paulinus annexed his lands and humiliated his people, (including his widow and daughters) through slaughter, torture and abuse. No thought or regard was given for any kind of fragile agreements or treaties. It was a reality check for the tribes of Britannia – Rome could just about do whatever it wanted.

C.60-61 CE

A QUEEN FIGHTS FOR HER HONOUR

The Iceni Queen Boudicca was incensed by the brutality of the Romans and their lack of honour towards her, her family and her people, and she rallied support among the Iceni and other tribes to rise up against the Romans. An army of tens of thousands plundered and destroyed Camulodunum (Colchester), then Londinium (London) and finally Verulamium (St Albans). As many as 80,000 Britons and Romans may have been killed in the fighting. The Roman governor Paulinius finally defeated Boudicca in what is known as the Battle of Watling Street (61 CE). Legend has it she poisoned herself rather than be captured, but her fate is unknown.





ABOVE
Boudicca inspired her people to rise up against Roman rule

RIGHT
Defeat would have made Emperor Nero's position even more fragile

the Catuvellauni to the west through to modern Hertfordshire, the Atrebates in the Thames Valley and the Cantiaci in Kent had all adopted Roman ways. They sponsored stone public buildings for the first time, sent their sons to Rome to be educated and wore togas when carrying out the new responsibilities of Roman civil government. All of this required funding in the form of loans to the aristocracy from the wealthy in Rome. This was burdensome for the leading Britons, and it seems as soon as a realistic opportunity presented itself to throw off the yoke of Rome the leading regional aristocrats did so, aligning their fate to that of Boudicca and the Iceni. The interesting question here is why did the Cantiaci not join the revolt? The answer is perhaps because they were at that time the most Romanised of the British tribes given their proximity to the continent.

If success against the Romans had continued would other tribes have joined in the revolt?
This is a very interesting question. I think we can be sure the Trinovantes, Catuvellauni and most likely the Atrebates joined the Iceni, but did others? Certainly, when Paulinus began his forced march from Wales towards the southeast he was building marching camps for his troops at the end of each day's march. This indicates that although once into the Welsh Marches he was back in his province, he felt he was now in enemy territory once more given the conflagration taking place in East Anglia. At the very least this shows a distrust of the 'conquered' tribal confederations there, for example the Dobunni and Coritani. I believe these and others would then have joined the rebellion if the Romans had lost their decisive engagement with Boudicca after the sack of St Albans. That, of course, would be dependent on any Romans being left to rebel against after such a catastrophe.

How would a Roman defeat have changed the political and social makeup of Britain in the future?
Roman Britain was always the wild northwest of the empire. It was a place of difference because the far north was never fully conquered, and it required a huge military presence to maintain the northern border. I estimate that around 12% of the entire military establishment was in only 4% of the geographic area of the empire. If you add to this Britain's distance from Rome, and the fact it was separated from the continent by the terrifying Oceanus, as the Romans knew the English Channel and North Sea, then you have one of the most marginal provinces in the empire. On a number of occasions I think Roman emperors considered abandoning their occupation here, one certainly in the context of the Boudiccan Revolt when Nero must surely have wondered if the province was worth the effort of holding.

To that end, if Paulinus had lost his decisive engagement I think that the Romans would have abandoned Britain, perhaps never to return. It is no coincidence that when Paulinus' order for Legio II Augusta to join him in the Midlands reached its stand in-commander Poenius Postumus in Exeter, he refused to move. The reason? Just to the south was the port of the legionary fortress, a fine harbour located at modern Topsham on the River Exe. The praefectus castrorum was making sure that he and his men could escape back to the continent if, as he expected, the governor was defeated.

Any Roman abandonment of Britain, especially in such shocking circumstances, would have had profound implications for later British history. It is very likely, given the youth of the province at this point, that the various tribal regions would have reasserted their territorial identities, including the reestablishment of their original borders. Internecine warfare would then have followed as each struggled for regional dominance, with perhaps Boudicca for a time being the most influential figure across the main island of Britain. Furthermore, given some have speculated Boudicca was actually born on the continent (for example among the Batavi in the Rhine Delta), an eventual victory for her in Britain may also have impacted the narrative of Roman dominance in the continental west.

With a united Britain would future invasions (for example by the Germans in the 4th and 5th centuries CE, and later the Vikings) have been less successful?
I don't think there was any chance at all that the native Britons would have united under one leader in the long term in the wake of a Roman withdrawal. Much more likely, as I set out previously, would have been a return to the pre-Roman tribal identities, loyalties and borders. In short, normal service would have resumed.

What would defeat to Boudicca have meant to the reputation of the Roman Empire and Nero?
The emperor, the Roman political establishment and the Roman military all knew that the Boudiccan Revolt was a close run thing. They all knew that the great Emperor Augustus' lowest moment had been the loss of Varus' three legions to the Germans in the Teutoburg Forest in 9 CE, and the jeopardy in Britain in 60/61 CE was even greater, with four legions in danger and with an emperor far less secure in his position. In short, the Romans were acutely aware that any overall loss to Boudicca in Britannia would have been absolutely disastrous for them. You can see this in their response after Paulinus' final victory. This included drafting in 2,000 more legionaries from Germany together with 1,000 auxiliary cavalry and eight units of auxiliary foot to help stamp out the last flames of resistance to their occupation. This was then carried out with such vigour in the Iceni homelands of north Norfolk that the region remained for many years under-developed compared to the rest of the province.

BELOW
Rome's conquest of Britannia was nearly upended by Boudicca's rebellion

THE POSSIBILITY

61 CE – PRESENT

A VERY DIFFERENT POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

Without the stability of Roman rule across the country, and tribes all following their own way of life, disputing their territories and settling regional feuds, a Roman departure would have left the country far more fragmented. It's even possible that the countries we know as England, Scotland and Wales would have taken far longer to emerge, or even not exist at all. The gradual emergence from all the regional tribes of a dominant kingdom that could grow into a single unified nation would have been much more difficult, leading to centuries of instability and almost constant regional wars.

61 CE – PRESENT

MUD HUTS NOT METROPOLIS

Roman Britain created the foundations of modern life, with towns and cities of stone buildings, well-connected by efficient roads criss-crossing the country. With a Roman withdrawal the regional tribes may well have settled back into their own traditional ways, even purposefully rejecting any Roman influence. The emergence of towns and cities may have taken many more centuries, and perhaps in a less structured way. With the empire's stay cut short by centuries its legacy and influence would now be a very faint and almost insignificant influence on Britain's development.

61 CE – PRESENT

KING, WHAT KING?

With political instability following a Roman withdrawal the likelihood of a strong ruler to unify the feuding tribes, each with its own king, into a single country under one ruler would have been far more remote. The very concept of monarchy and kingship as we know it today may well have taken many more centuries to develop and take hold. Rome itself developed into an imperial empire with a single family lineage at its head and this became the model for all future generations of rulers to follow. Without the example of the Romans, there may never have been Alfred the Great, the long line of Saxon kings, or the subsequent monarchs that were to rule over an increasingly unified country.

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What if…

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION HAD SPREAD TO BRITAIN?

In 1789 revolutionary forces stormed the Bastille, but could the guillotine have come to Greenwich?

INTERVIEW WITH

Image courtesy of Lily Rapport

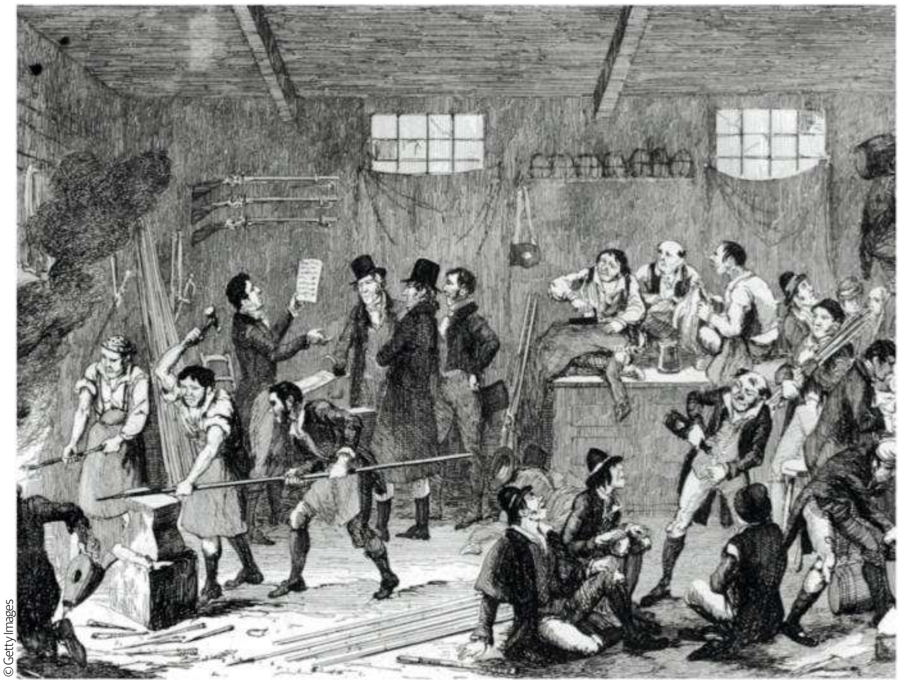
Michael Rapport

Dr Michael Rapport is a historian based at the University of Glasgow who specialises in the French Revolution and its global impact. His books include *Rebel Cities: Paris, London And New York In The Age Of Revolution* and *1848: Year Of Revolution.*

In 1700s France the so-called 'Third Estate', comprising everyone from peasant farmers to the bourgeoisie, were not happy. Politically they were invisible to both the First and Second Estates (the classes who wielded the most power) and, despite their poverty, were often subject to high taxation. The intellectual ideas of the Enlightenment began to preach the rights of the common man over the elites and following the extravagant spending of King Louis XVI, France's involvement in the American Revolutionary wars and other additional factors, France erupted into revolution. In 1793, this would lead to execution of the monarchy. A revolutionary wave swept across Europe but in Britain, despite fears to the contrary, there was no people's uprising. Was it ever a possibility? And what could have happened had the masses taken to the streets?

What were some of the responses to the French Revolution in Britain?
Initially, both politically and ideologically, there was an awful lot of enthusiasm and a sense that the French were becoming a bit more like Britain after 1688, forging a constitutional monarchy. There was also a radical movement, which embraced the French Revolution as a cause for parliamentary reform of Britain. At this stage Britain wasn't a democracy; far from it. Parliament primarily represented landed interest. However there were some notes of caution as well. In his book *Reflections On The Revolution In France* Edmund Burke basically said that this wasn't going to end well. In the British government, William Pitt believed that because France was so tied up with internal efforts to reform that effectively Britain didn't have to worry too much and Europe would be at peace for quite a long time.

How did the government and conservative groups respond to the perceived threat?
Initially very sluggishly, until 1792 when the revolution radicalised and the monarchy was overthrown. This was the start of the slide of Britain joining the French Revolutionary Wars. However there was also concern about the radical ideas floating around Britain, including those written by Thomas Paine. He wrote *Rights Of Man,* which was a quite brilliant defence of the French Revolution. The second part, published in 1792, proposed some measures that in a sense anticipated the modern welfare state, in a very mild way. In response, the government issued a royal proclamation against seditious writings in May 1792. However, the real panic began when the French revolutionary armies spilled across Europe, conquering territory. In November 1792, The Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property was founded to challenge a burgeoning popular radical movement in Britain. The association founded branches across



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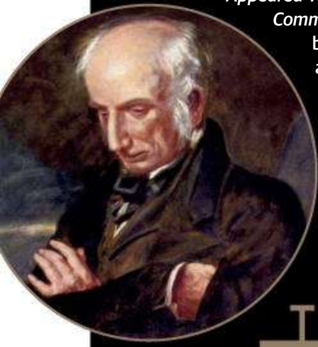
RIGHT
Illustration of a meeting the United Irishmen prior to the revolution

THE PAST

1790s

LITERARY IMPACT

An often overlooked effect of the French Revolution on Britain was its literary and artistic impact, which is often linked to the origins of the Romantic movement. The Revolution rejected old ideas in favour of those of the Enlightenment, and English poets such as Samuel Taylor-Coleridge and William Wordsworth brought those sentiments into their work. Wordsworth himself would compose a poem entitled *The French Revolution As It Appeared To Enthusiasts At Its Commencement*. In 1797 both Wordsworth and Coleridge were investigated by British agents after they were suspected of being French spies, however they were dismissed as more mischievous than menacing.



1798

FAILED REVOLUTION IN IRELAND

In 1798, The Society of United Irishmen sought to reform parliament and end British rule in Ireland. Many farmers and poor agricultural workers joined the society as it was both radicalised and militarised. The British Government feared the worst and in 1796 had passed an Insurrection Act, confiscating some private arms and suppressing the *Northern Star*, a radical newspaper. That same year France had even sent a fleet to assist, which despite most of the ships being scattered by storms, a few were able to reach Ireland. In May, fighting broke out but was primarily confined to both Ulster and Wexford. Despite some successes by June the rebellion was almost over. At this point, Wolfe Tone, a British exile living in France who had been part of the earlier fleet, obtained a handful of French ships to carry out raids along the Irish coast. However in September he was captured in Lough Swilly, Donegal, and cut his throat with a penknife rather than be hanged. As a result of the rebellion, the Act of Union was passed, abolishing the Irish parliament.

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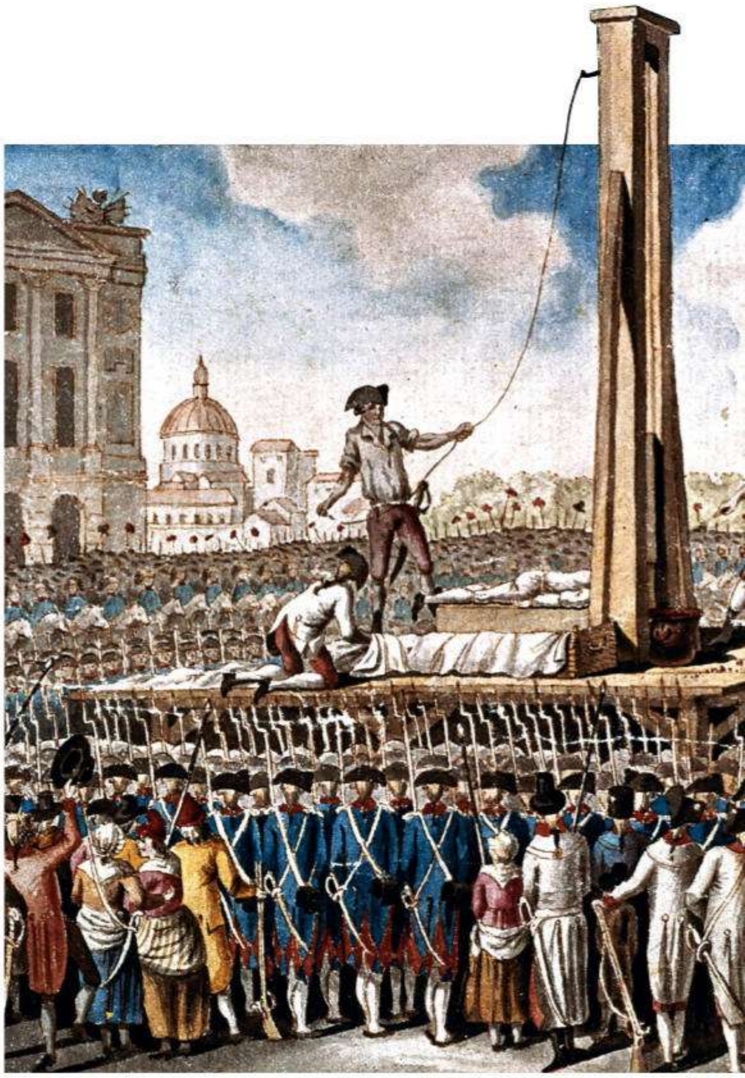


ABOVE The execution of Louis XVI in 1793

the country to put pressure on radicals, to intimidate them and bully them into violence. Another way in which conservative groups respond was to create volunteer movements. Initially the government was reluctant because the volunteer movement was essentially creating militias, in theory to guard against French invasion, but also to act as a counter revolutionary militia against domestic radicalism.

If an English Revolution had occurred were there any groups that could have led it?

If a revolution had occurred in the mid-1790s, then the London Corresponding Society would have been the obvious choice. Between 1797 and 1799, when there was perhaps more of a possibility of revolution, the London Corresponding Society became increasingly more radical until it was formally banned in 1799. There were other underground organisations like the United Scotsman, the United Irishman (who actually started a revolution in Ireland in 1798) and the United Englishman. However, it's hard to tell how serious a threat some of these were because most of what we know about them comes from government agents and propaganda. The vast majority of British reformers insisted they weren't Jacobins and weren't in favour of a violent revolution, only reform of the House of Commons. If a revolution had occurred, it would've been led by a very small radical fringe.

Were any plans in place?

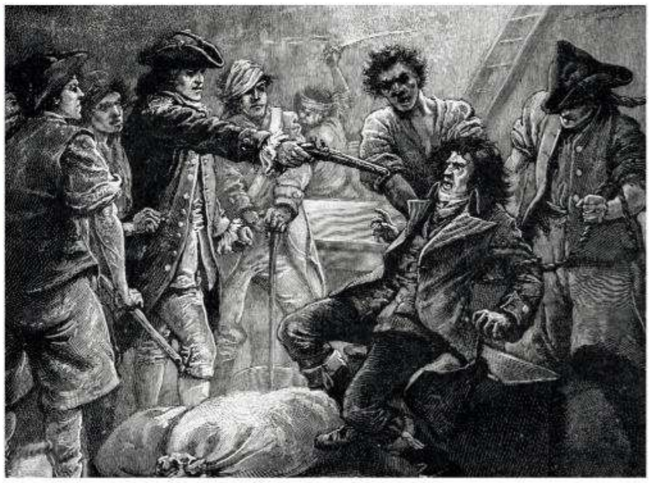
All the radical organisations had a kind of a programme of change, but more often than not it was through persuasion. They hoped they could persuade parliament that it was time to reform. In Scotland, the radical Society of the Friends of the People established what they call a Convention in Edinburgh to debate parliamentary reform and they hoped that they would act as a kind of "conscience" for parliament. They wanted it to be a kind of assembly that expressed a broad will of a very broad range of people. However, in terms of plans for actual violent revolution? They exist but most seem to come from radicals in exile. For example Wolfe Tone, an Irish Republican, spoke to the French about landing a force in Ireland to back an insurrection. There's also Thomas Muir, who had been found guilty of sedition and transported to Australia. He escaped and ended up in Revolutionary France, where he petitioned the French government to support a revolution in Scotland by landing a force. But a lot of these exiles had been out of the country for a long time and were out of touch. With Tone in Ireland the French did send a force, too late, but they sent one.

Were there any legal ramifications of the perceived threat?

Yes. There were some 23 laws against seditious writings; correspondence with France, once war had broken out, was illegal; and there was the Alien Act, empowering the government to deport anybody who they thought threatened the established order. They also passed a law against seditious meetings and banned what they called Combinations, which are the early forms of trade union. Also, there are the treason trials. In 1793, members of the Edinburgh Convention, including Thomas Muir, were tried for sedition and sentenced to transportation to Australia. In 1794, you had a range of treason trials in London. Treason was a more serious

BELOW The medal of the London Corresponding Society

LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY



BELOW
An illustration of the capture of Wolfe Tone, who worked with the French to bring revolution to Ireland

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crime and could carry the death penalty. The government said the radicals were trying to start a violent revolution, while the radicals said all they wanted was peaceful reform of parliament. The jurors weren't convinced by the government's case and the trials collapsed.

What could have been the immediate impacts of an attempted English Revolution in the late-1700s?
For an example of what might have happened had it failed, we can look to Ireland in 1798 – the repressions are pretty horrible. So the immediate impact of a failed English Revolution would have probably led to violent suppression. A successful revolution may have allowed the French in and maybe created a sister Republic out of either the entire British Isles or separate ones out of Ireland, England, Wales, etc. The French did have some vague plans as to what they might do. There's a memorandum, I think in the French Foreign Ministry, which has what the departments of Britain would look like if there was to be a French-style revolution in Britain. London would be called the Département de la Thames (Department of the Thames) just as Paris was called the Department of the Seine.

Could it have toppled the monarchy?
It depends. Let's say that there was a copycat revolution in 1789-91 – if they were doing it along the French model it probably would have been a constitutional monarchy but with a more democratic House of Commons. After the 1790s it almost certainly would have been a Republic that would have gotten rid of the monarchy. The French would have insisted on it, if the French had come in.

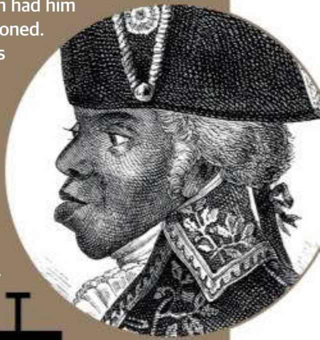
What do you think the impact of an English Revolution in the late 1700s or 1800s could have been?
Let's say that there's been a successful revolution in Britain and the monarchy has been overthrown. I think the first thing is that the strategic realities probably would not have changed much in the long run. Let's assume, for the sake of argument, that Napoleon did come to power in France – you would still have other issues to deal with such as the strategic position of Russia. What might have happened, though, is that the British Empire initially might have abolished slavery earlier because the French revolutionaries abolished slavery in 1794. Napoleon reintroduced it in 1802, which led to Haitian independence, but maybe the abolitionists in Britain would have gained the upper hand. But that's probably a fantasy – the Dutch had a sister Republic and they didn't abolish slavery. Ideologically it would have established a longer revolutionary tradition in Britain. We have the revolution of the 1640s and they do execute the king in 1649, but this would have established one more attuned to ideas of natural rights and individual liberties. If there had been a violent revolution in Britain and the French had arrived, what would have happened to parliament? It probably would have been completely overhauled and we would have had, at least in the long run, two different parliamentary conditions. One monarchist with a balanced constitution and based on the idea of parliamentary sovereignty, the other Republican and based on popular sovereignty. That would have established a much bigger constitutional debate in the long run.

THE POSSIBILITY

1794

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY?

As Michael Rapport suggests, there is the possibility that a British revolution could have led to the abolition of slavery. A slave revolt in France led the revolutionaries to abolish slavery in 1794 but Napoleon would later reinstate it. In Haiti, inspired by the French Revolution as well as the horrific racist culture and brutality of slave owners, revolutionary sentiment was growing. When citizenship status was granted to the affrantis (free individuals who were of African or mixed descent), white Europeans chose to ignore this. A slave revolt broke out and the country was torn into rival fractions. Toussaint Louverture was a former slave and general who gained control of several areas and operated an almost independent Haiti, until Napoleon had him captured and imprisoned. By 1804, Haiti was able to claim independence. What would have happened on British colonies and whether Britain could have abolished slavery, we will never know.



1793

LONG LIVE THE KING?

Much of our popular imagery of the French Revolution comes from the execution of the monarchy, in particular Marie-Antoinette. In 1791, King Louis XVI had attempted to flee to Austria but was spotted at the French border town of Varennes, where he was arrested and returned to Paris. Having been returned to Paris the king was forced to approve a new constitution that had stripped him of most of his power. However, a mere year later he was arrested and the monarchy abolished. Placed on trial for treason, he was sentenced to execution. A violent revolution in Britain may well have led to the British monarchy suffering the same fate.

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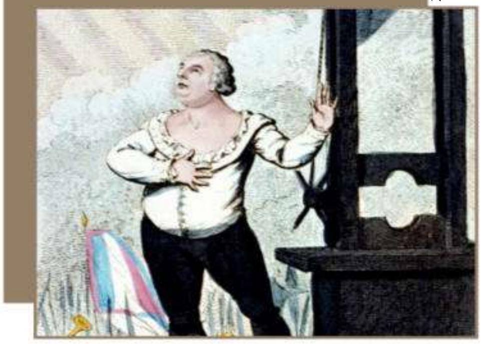


What if...

THE FIRST CRUSADE HAD BEEN DEFEATED?

How might the history of the Middle Ages have been altered had this massive event gone in a different direction?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Jonny Ring

Peter Frankopan

Professor of Global History at Oxford University, Director of the Centre for Byzantine Research and Senior Research Fellow at Worcester College. Author of *The First Crusade: The Call From The East*, and *The Silk Roads: A New History Of The World*

Who were the main forces behind the First Crusade?

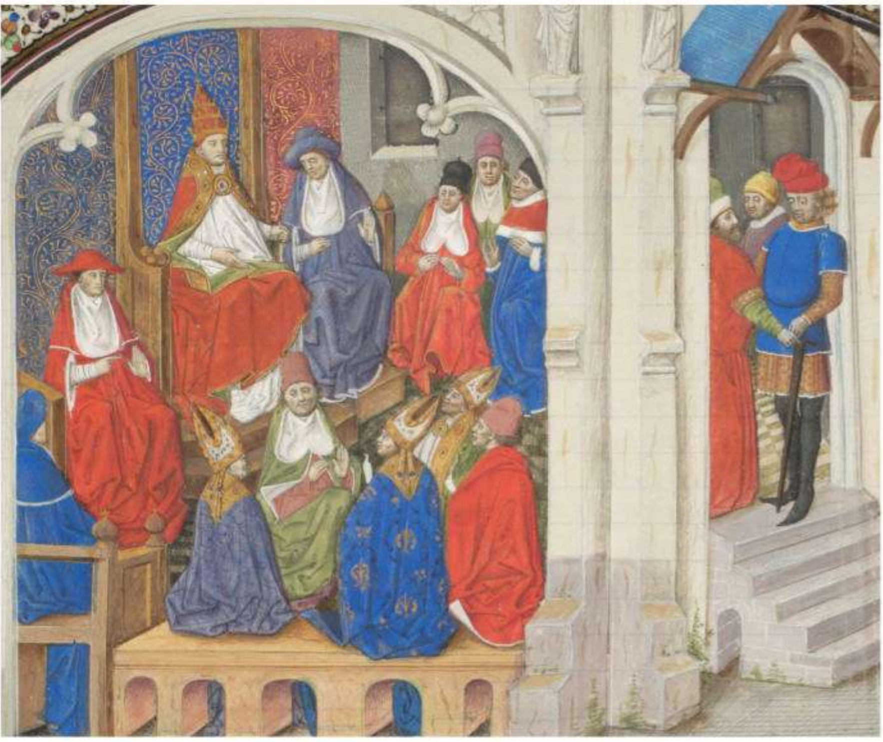
The Byzantine Empire, centred around Constantinople, was a model in managing risk – one reason it had been so stable and successful for over half a millennium after the fall of Rome. In the late 11th century, however, a build-up of pressure for multiple sources brought the empire to its knees. The Emperor Alexios I Komnenos had taken his throne by military force in a coup in 1081, and as basically a usurper with no inherited authority his position was perhaps not as stable as many of his predecessors. And the deterioration of the position in Asia Minor was serious, in particular the loss of large, fortified cities to the Turks, thereby enabling them to cement their foothold in the region. The emperor needed large-scale support to recover those – and turned to the west for expertise as well as manpower. In 1095 he sent envoys to Pope Urban II, imploring him to help fellow Christians against the scourge of the Muslim threat. The Pope did not disappoint, and at the Council of Clermont in 1095 gave a fiery and passionate speech which would ignite crusading fever.

How significant is it that the first to respond was the 'People's Crusade'?

On the back of the religious fervour drummed up in passionate campaigning by both the pope and the French cleric Peter the Hermit, the population in Western Europe had been whipped up by news of the crisis in Byzantium and beyond and were responding to calls to do something about it. In military terms, however, the People's Crusade – made up of some knights but mainly ordinary devout Christians mixed together with the dispossessed, opportunists and the downright criminal and led by Peter – was totally insignificant. The People's Crusade was a disaster – chaotic, disorganised and foolhardy. A bit like a crowd of football hooligans on the rampage. It also had a very sinister and disturbing side. As this first wave of crusaders moved through Europe what could and should be done in the name of Christ was often ignored or excused away. In order to support themselves there was mass looting; in order to show their devotion to Christ there was the brutal massacre of several communities of Jews in Germany who were caught up in this fiery uncontrollable tide against all non-Christians. Such was the success, interpretation and effectiveness of the spread of the Crusade message in the mid-1090s.

Can the motives of either side be seen as purely religious?

Much depends on what one means by 'purely religious' or even by 'religious'. A lot of historians take ideas about



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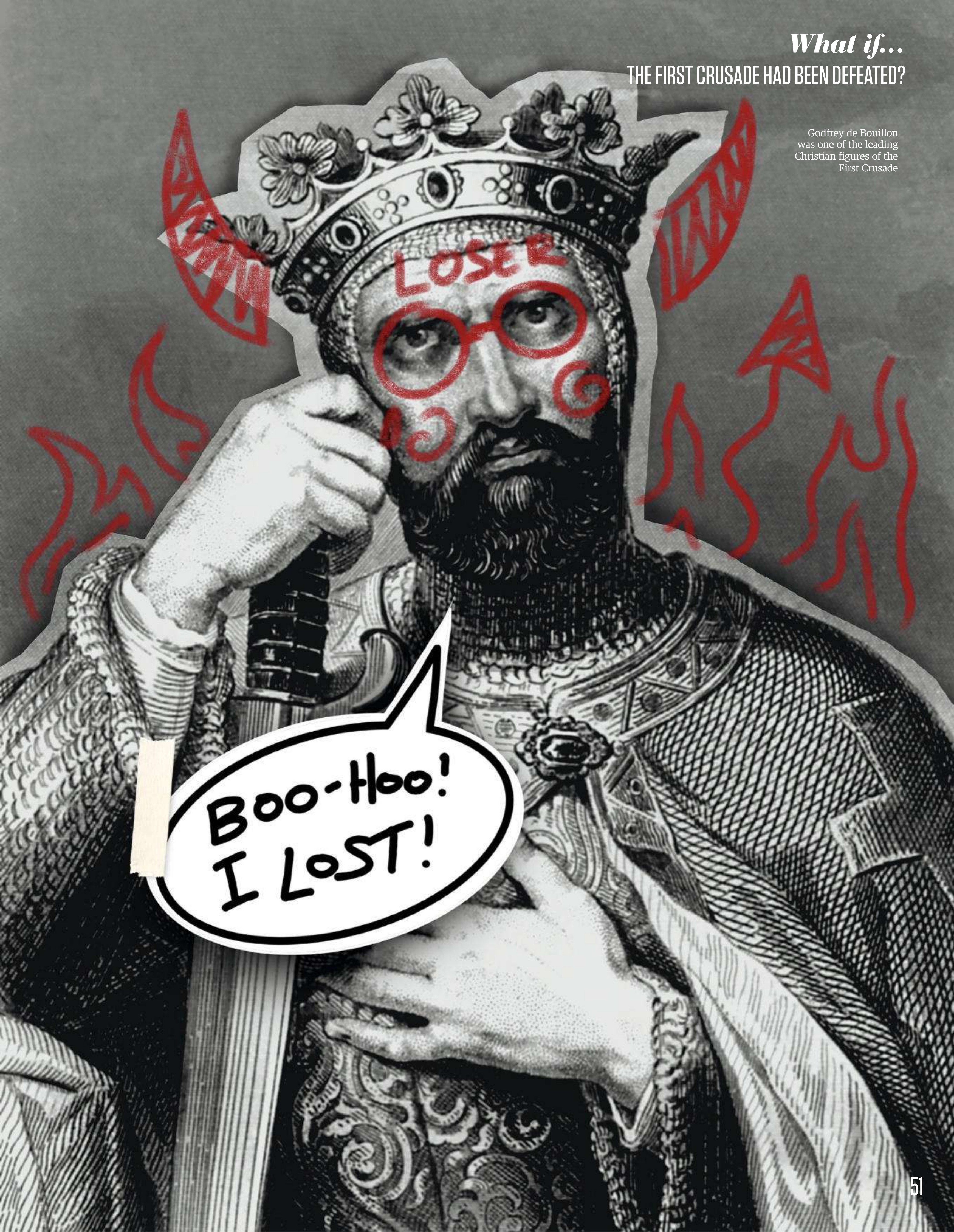
RIGHT
The Council of Clermont in 1095

What if…
THE FIRST CRUSADE HAD BEEN DEFEATED?


LOSER
BOO-HOO! I LOST!

Godfrey de Bouillon was one of the leading Christian figures of the First Crusade

THE PAST

1081-95

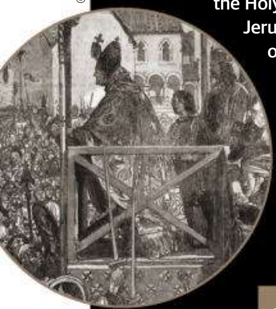
MILITARY PRESSURE IN THE EAST, A PERFECT STORM

The Byzantine Emperor Alexios was losing territory fast and was desperate to find some way of stopping the rot. Heavily fortified cities, that had once been his, were now being used against him by the Turks in order to bolster their advances and their ambitions as they pushed West. With the increase in pressure on his borders, despite relations between the Western and Eastern followers of Christianity being at something of a low ebb, his only option was to appeal to the West.

1095

THE REACH AND ENERGY OF THE CHURCH

Christianity permeated every corner of 11th century life in both the Byzantine Empire and Western Europe, and it was to be faith and belief that were to act as the catalyst for the forthcoming war on Islam. The rising ambitions of the papacy, and Urban II in particular, set the tone for the assistance to their fellow Christians in the East. The passion of oratory was intense, demonising the Turks through detailed, macabre and horrific descriptions of their treatment of Christians, plus the ultimate insult to Christ and Christianity – occupation by Islam of the Holy Land and Holy City of Jerusalem. With its network of priests and monks the message was carried throughout Europe, stirring up passion, anger and hatred that would call many to arms and 'follow the cross', because 'God wills it'.



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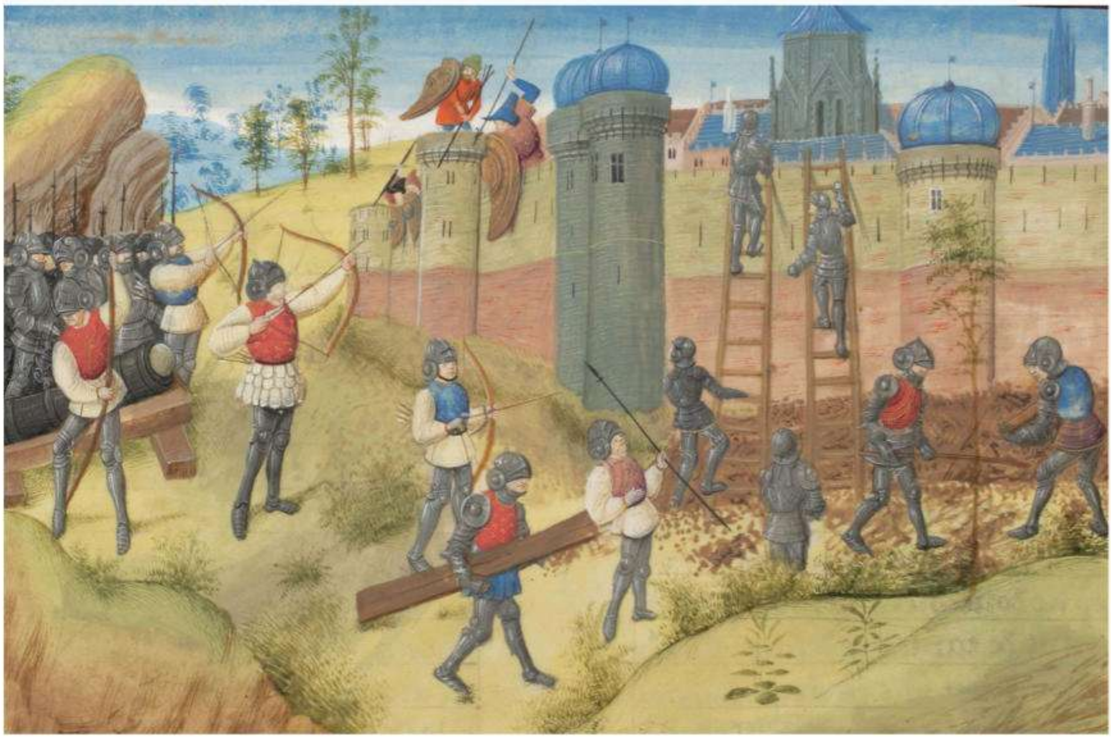
1099

PILGRIMAGE

As the pinnacle of faith and devotion, it was believed that pilgrimage to the Holy Land and to Jerusalem was a cast iron guarantee of the cleansing of sins and acceptance into Heaven. The journey had always been fraught with incredible danger, but with the capture of Jerusalem, and the later establishment of the Levantine states under Christian control, such a journey of faith became more popular and more possible.



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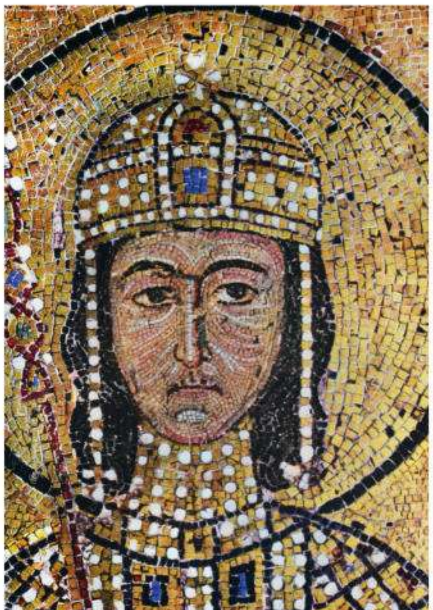
ABOVE The siege of Jerusalem 1099. Citizens were slaughtered after its capture

faith and devotion on trust – and over-rely on charter documents and other primary sources that can easily result in over-simplifications or even mislead entirely. I think motivations are always problematic as they are usually complex and their interpretation highly subjective. And, of course, they could and did change before, during and after the Crusades for participants, observers and indeed people living far away too. The initial 'call to arms' for the Crusade was, on the surface at least, very much a message of defence of the Christian faith, but the underlying issues of land, power and influence were always very close to the surface.



LEFT The Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos

How different could the Byzantine Empire, Western Europe and future control of the Holy Land have looked if the Crusade had been defeated? And how ambitious could the Turks potentially have been?

That's relatively easy to answer because all the Crusades effectively did was to hold up the advances of the Turks for a few hundred years. By the late 1300s the Ottomans were deep into the Balkans, bypassing Constantinople (which they finally took in 1453) and over the next five centuries occasionally threatened to overspill far beyond too. Vienna could have fallen in 1529 or in 1683.

Ironically, the more interesting question here is a counter-intuitive one: would there have been an Ottoman Empire in the first place without the Crusades? In fact, what the western expeditions to the Holy Land did was to unify the Islamic world and to paper over the very substantial political, religious and ethnic cracks to pave the way for a true Mediterranean, African and Asian superpower. I doubt that could or would have happened without the intervention of the Crusades.

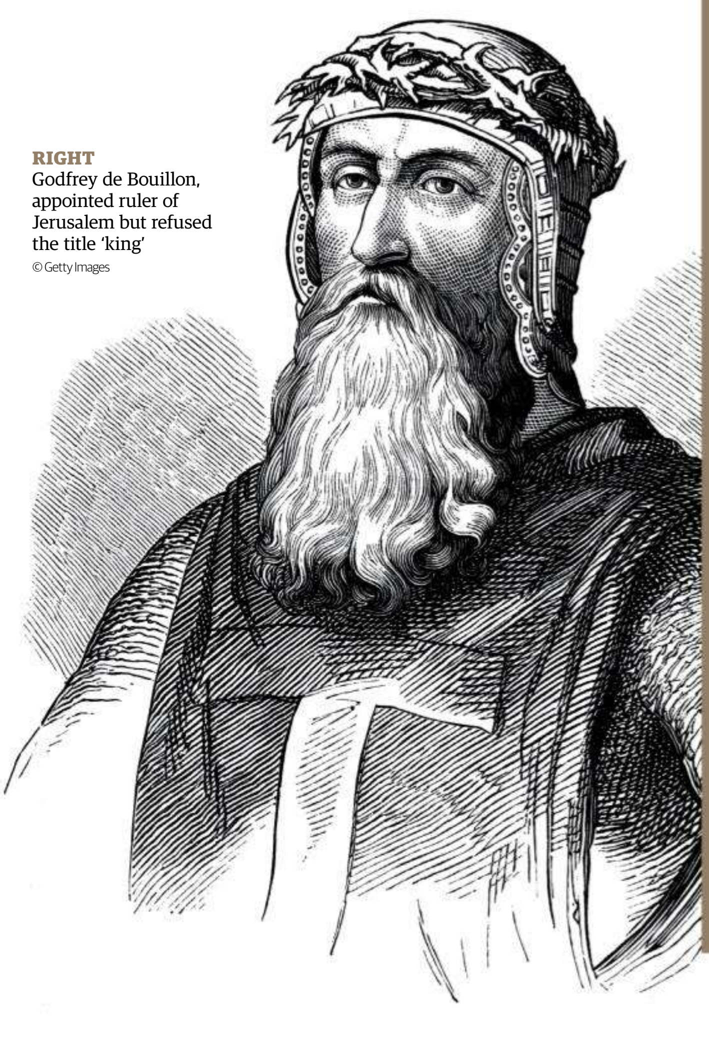
What consequences would defeat have had on the reputation of the pope, the church, and the military might of Western Europe? Were other individual reputations at stake?

The Crusades were the making of Urban II and of the papacy in general. Had the expedition ended in defeat at Jerusalem in 1099, or not taken place at all, the pope would have been far less significant as a political figure in European and global history. There was a long history of competition between religious and secular leaders in the church in Western Europe; this would have continued without the Crusades, and I suspect the Pope would have got to the same place of wielding real power in the end some other way. Peter the Hermit, after heavy defeat in battle, was stopped from fleeing to the safety of Constantinople and made to suffer the same dangers and tribulations of his fellow crusaders. The prominent kings of Western Europe such as France, England and the Holy Roman Emperor took no part as, ironically, having all been excommunicated by Pope Urban II they were excluded from taking part in a 'holy war'! For the prominent nobility and military leaders, such as Raymond of Toulouse and Godfrey of Bouillon, the capture of Jerusalem was to catapult them into the realms of stardom, idealising their exploits, their honour and their heroism through heavily romanticised song and literature. The realities of anti-Semitism and the massacre of innocent men women and children after the capture and fall of the Holy City were to be ignored or conveniently forgotten. Now there was a new idealised benchmark against which levels of chivalry, honour and piety would be upheld by those crusaders who were to come, as well as firmly fixing the accepted image of the crusading knight into history for hundreds of years. Defeat of these 'heroes' would have painted a very different picture altogether.

Were there potential flaws that could have led to defeat or was victory inevitable?
This very much depends on perspective. Seen from the perspective of the capture of Jerusalem as being the sole purpose of the First Crusade then yes, it turns into a great success; but taking the Crusades as a whole they ended in failure. So, the First Crusade can be seen as a classic case of winning a battle but losing the war.

But if we are to look at the First Crusade on its own, it's a different story. It could have ended in disaster on multiple occasions. In one way, it is incredible that it did not do so, especially during the Siege of Antioch in 1098. It should also be remembered that after travelling such a huge distance, battles and disease took a horrific toll on numbers, with only a fraction of the original armies actually making it to the walls of Jerusalem, leaving them vulnerable to larger forces and defeat or victory very much on a knife edge.

Would defeat have stopped any future Crusades in their tracks?
Defeat would have meant that an army of at least 60,000, and by some estimates and reports perhaps as many as 100,000, had failed; something of a substantial blow to the reputation of Western military might and expertise, and the stomach for any future conflict in the name of Christ or honour may have dissolved. One can also speculate that such a catastrophe would have led to a much more galvanised and even greater response - but I doubt it. It's worth remembering that Jerusalem fell to the Arabs 450 years before the Crusades, and no one made much of an effort to recover if before the 1090s, emphasising the complex and various elements that had come into play that ignited the First Crusade and then fanned the flames.



RIGHT
Godfrey de Bouillon, appointed ruler of Jerusalem but refused the title 'king'
© Getty Images

THE POSSIBILITY

LATE 11TH CENTURY

THE FALL OF BYZANTIUM'S EASTERN PROVINCES

This would have changed the nature and culture of the empire completely. The threat to their faith, trade, society and influence was already stretched to the limit. But if overwhelmed by the marauding Seljuk Turks the very fabric of the empire would have been decimated, with consequences not only for the Byzantine world, but also for Western Europe which would be denied its 'buffer zone' with Islam.

1099

THE UNION OF THE WESTERN AND EASTERN CHURCHES

Although at the time of the First Crusade relations between the Western and Eastern Christian Churches were a little cold, there was still the possibility of a stronger union on the cards. But, with the relative success of the First Crusade, the papacy saw its influence rise dramatically and so any possible strengthening of the Christian world through closer ties of East and West was derailed by the papacy's new sense of its own powers and independent ambitions.

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12TH CENTURY

THE ANCHORING OF THE SELJUK STATE

The development and expansion of the Turk's territorial and cultural ambition would have come far sooner than it did. By establishing a solid foundation around Baghdad, they would have been able to look confidently both towards the West, more deeply into Europe (as they eventually did), as well as to the East and India. In addition to their eventual spread around the southern Mediterranean and North Africa this would have become a formidable Islamic empire much sooner than the West expected or was prepared for.

What if...

ARGENTINA HAD WON THE FALKLANDS WAR?

Margaret Thatcher gambled on direct military action. But an Argentine victory could have left both her and Britain's reputation in tatters

INTERVIEW WITH

© Paula Fernley

Professor Richard Toye

Richard is professor of Modern History at the University of Exeter. He has published over 20 books, the most recent of which is *Age of Hope: Labour, 1945, and the Birth of Modern Britain* (Bloomsbury Continuum, 2023).

Following the Argentinian incursion into the Falklands, the move by Margaret Thatcher to deploy a military task force to retake the territory galvanised a nation. Britain seemed to be united in a patriotic fervour and single-minded belief that it had been deeply wronged and was taking action to show it was still a major player to be reckoned with on the world stage. Following the British victory, and a hero's welcome for the task force, Thatcher would refer to the 'Falklands Spirit' for years to come. But with a British failure in the South Atlantic, the global respect afforded Margaret Thatcher might never have materialised, and there could have been serious repercussions for Britain, at home and around the world.

What may have been the impact on global politics and Britain's reputation if Britain had lost?

This depends on the exact scenario. One possibility would have been that the UK's political and military leadership decided that action to recapture the islands was simply too risky, and that it should just be accepted. Another is that military action was tried but failed – possible if the Americans had not given critical intelligence and logistical help. The first outcome would have been easier to survive than the second. Few people in Britain even knew where the Falklands were, and though the issue could not exactly have been brushed under the carpet, it would have been possible to try to manage it diplomatically, and through economic sanctions. This was what had been tried after Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, and although the Rhodesian question became a running sore in British politics, it never brought down a government. Once a task force had sailed to the South Atlantic, though, the stakes were much higher. Defeat would have been reminiscent of the 1956 Suez Crisis (albeit that was a diplomatic catastrophe surrounding a successful military operation). In terms of global reputation, it would likely have confirmed impressions of Britain as a declining power with failed imperial pretensions. Certainly, it would have been harder for Thatcher (or any replacement prime minister) to present herself as a serious player on the world stage. Although Britain's impact on the end of the Cold War should not be overstated, Thatcher deserves credit for recognising Mikhail Gorbachev as a Soviet leader with whom it was possible to do business. She was also widely admired in Eastern Europe. It is hard to envisage things turning out quite the same way if Britain had recently experienced military humiliation, though.

What boost would a win have given the military dictatorship in Argentina and how would that impact on the country's future?

Victory would doubtless have given the Argentine Junta a significant boost, but equally clearly it would not have solved the fundamental political, economic,

BOLIVIE
ARGENTINE
Valparaiso
Valdivia
Port Stanley
Falkland
Magellan
TERRE DE FEU
Cap Horn

Main image source: © Alamy

RIGHT
Falklands sovereignty has been disputed for more than a century

Falkland Islands
(Islas Malvinas)
(U.K.)
Stanley
Puerto S. Julián
Bahía Grande
Gallegos
Estr. de Magallanes
Tierra del Fuego
Ushuaia
T.F.
I. de los Estados

THE PAST

PRE-1982

CLAIM AND COUNTERCLAIM

The issue of sovereignty over the Falklands Islands had been a matter of dispute between Britain and Argentina since the early 19th century. By 1833, Great Britain had established the islands, basically using gunboat diplomacy, as British territory. For more than a century the dispute rumbled on in the background, an ever-present agenda item for British-Argentine diplomatic relations. In 1982, under the military Junta led by Leopoldo Galtieri, the voices grew much louder. Things were not going well at home for the generals, with eye-watering inflation and human rights abuses against their opponents. They needed a glorious victory to reunite the country, and their attention turned to the Falkland Islands.

MAR – APR 1982

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD

On 19 March 1982, a group of salvage workers raised the Argentine flag on the island of South Georgia, also British Territory. On 2 April, Argentina invaded the Falklands and later that month had 10,000 troops on the islands. Thatcher's government declared a war exclusion zone around the islands. On 5 April, a British task force led by two aircraft carriers set sail for the South Atlantic. By 25 April, South Georgia was recaptured. The sinking of the Argentine cruiser, General Belgrano, by a British nuclear submarine kept most of the Argentine fleet in port.

1982-83

VICTORY AWAY GIVES VICTORY AT HOME

There were considerable losses of aircraft and ships on both sides, but Argentina could never create the dominance in the air to stop a land invasion. Following an amphibious landing, British troops started their assault. They faced a fierce and determined defence, but on 14 June, the Argentine forces surrendered. Success in the South Atlantic meant a hero's welcome on the return of the Task Force. It also assured victory for Thatcher and the Conservatives in the 1983 election. The reputations of both Britain and its prime minister were intact.

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and social problems from which the invasion was designed to distract. On 6 April 1982, around a quarter of a million people gathered before the presidential palace in Buenos Aires in support of the Falklands/Malvinas invasion. Yet they also voiced their opposition to the Junta. The opposition was determined to demand sweeping change once the war was over – whether it was won or lost. Triumph on the battlefield would have given the regime breathing space – but it would not have forestalled its probably inevitable collapse.

In short, a different outcome to the war would not have averted the Argentinian political instability that persists to this day. It is also interesting to ask, though, if the USA could have maintained better relations with Latin America had it not decided to back Britain – a move seen widely across the region as a betrayal.

What would a loss have meant for Margaret Thatcher and for the Conservative Party?

Whereas acceptance of the situation might have been politically survivable, that was not Thatcher's style. Once she had committed herself to taking back the islands by force, her future prospects were inevitably tied to the operation's success. If it had failed unambiguously, she would have had to resign. The question is, who would have taken over? There were a number of able ministers in the Cabinet. Three of them, Willie Whitelaw, Jim Prior, and Geoffrey Howe, had been defeated by Thatcher for the leadership in 1975. Of these, Howe, as chancellor of the exchequer, might have been the most plausible contender, but there could also have been wildcards such as the ambitious environment secretary, Michael Heseltine.

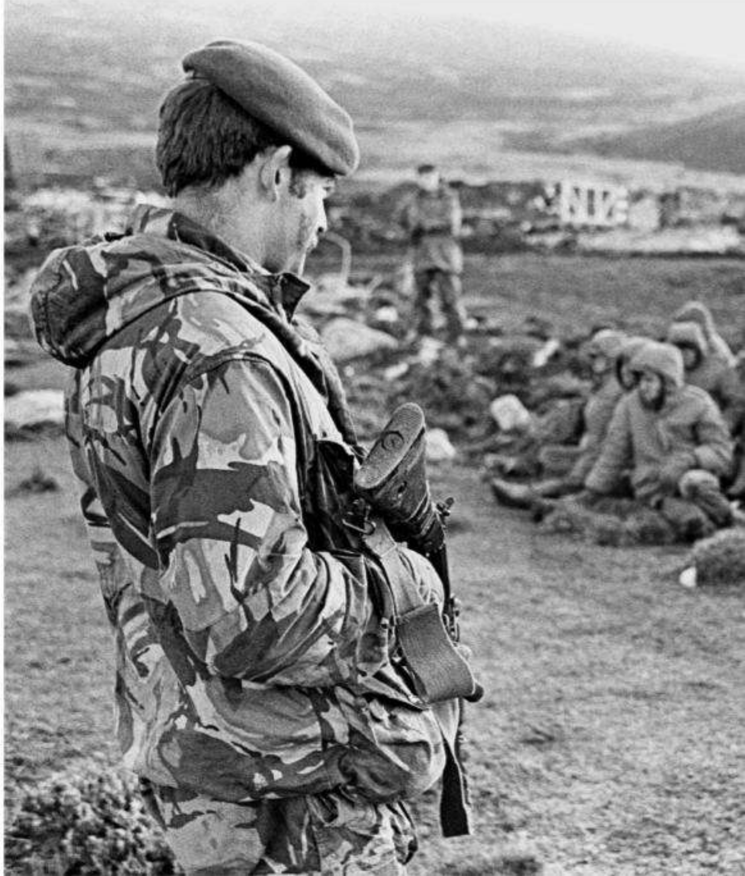
What, though, would have been the outcome for the ideological direction of the Conservatives? In 1982, Thatcher was in the process of converting the party to her brand of economics, but still had to be mindful of the divisions between 'wets' and 'dries'. Howe was fully signed up to the free market agenda but might have lacked the force of personality to drive through radical change by himself. Defeat in the Falklands would certainly have strengthened the hand of those who had long been sceptical of Thatcher's approach, even though her economic policies would not obviously have been discredited by military failure as such. In other words, Tory divisions would have been exacerbated, and if Thatcher had remained on the backbenches, she would have had little incentive to hold her tongue.

What public opinion issues would need to be managed in Britain?

The despatch of the Task Force was accompanied by an upsurge in jingoistic feeling. Defeat in the South Atlantic would surely have led to a sense of crushing disappointment, even betrayal, likely much encouraged by parts of the popular press. This was also a time of mass unemployment and considerable industrial strife. The loss of the war could have had repercussions for Britain's global economic standing,

ABOVE-LEFT
Margaret Thatcher staked her reputation on the Task Force

ABOVE-RIGHT
General Galtieri hoped victory would settle unrest at home



BELOW
Captured Argentinian soldiers were repatriated

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which would have made these problems even harder to manage. However, Suez offered a precedent for the Conservatives in how to successfully deal with a heavy reputational blow. Anthony Eden quickly stood down on grounds of ill health and his successor, Harold Macmillan, moved quickly to mend relations with the USA, while maintaining a world statesperson image which seemed to suggest that nothing very damaging had happened. Although it is difficult to see exactly how the same trick could have been pulled off in the conditions of the 1980s, the Conservatives have historically been very good at sustaining themselves in power even in spite of major crises and obvious failures. However, the loss of the Falklands would certainly have dented their reputation as the patriotic party, and a new threat might have emerged from the right.

Would a loss have meant Labour won the 1983 election?
This seems far from certain. The Labour Party was extremely divided and its leader, Michael Foot, was not widely regarded as a credible prime minister. If the Conservatives had ditched Thatcher and adopted a more consensual style of politics, they might actually have increased their appeal. That said, the Tories would have faced an enormous challenge, and the prospect of election victory might have led Labour to act in a more united way. It could conceivably have squeaked a narrow majority.

> “The Tories would have faced an enormous challenge, and the prospect of election victory might have led Labour to act in a more united way”

However, there is another possibility. The Social Democratic Party (SDP) broke away from the Labour Party in 1981. Prior to the Falklands, it rode high in the polls, and in fact (in alliance with the Liberals) scored a quarter of the votes in the 1983 election. If the Conservatives had been discredited by defeat, and if Labour had failed to solve its internal and policy issues, the SDP-Liberal Alliance could have been significantly strengthened. The first-past-the-post electoral system tends to favour the two main parties. This makes it unlikely that the Alliance would have been able to form a government in its own right unless its performance was truly spectacular. However, if the Conservatives, Labour, and the Alliance had all secured 33 per cent shares, the Alliance could have emerged as a potential kingmaker/coalition partner. Perhaps a Geoffrey Howe-Roy Jenkins partnership would have rendered the Cameron-Clegg coalition historically unnecessary.

How would domestic and economic politics in the UK have looked in the years after a defeat, and since?
Let us continue with the Tory-Alliance coalition scenario. The Conservatives moderate their policies, undertaking only a few further modest privatisations and tax cuts, and making common cause with their Alliance partners in favour of European integration. At a further election in 1987, the Alliance emerges as the largest party and Jenkins becomes prime minister. When he retires through ill health, David Owen, foreign secretary, enters No 10. When the Berlin Wall falls he gains a temporary boost from the ‘peace dividend’. But his personality is too abrasive to maintain unity, and though he squeezes out a narrow surprise victory in 1992, the British people are tired with the politics of the centre ground and are instead looking for a new approach. The Labour Party revives and in 1997 wins a landslide victory under an MP from the 1983 intake with radical left-wing credentials. His name is Tony Blair.

THE POSSIBILITY

1983

THE IRON LADY MELTS

It is unlikely, having staked so much of her reputation – and that of her party – on the defence of the Falkland Islands, that Margaret Thatcher would have been able to politically survive an Argentine victory. With loss of face, and faith, in the eyes of the electorate she would have become a liability for the Conservatives. At worst it would mean outright defeat in the polls. At best, some form of coalition with the rising SDP party could be struck. But without Thatcher as leader, or perhaps even the Tories in opposition, pivotal moments in history, such as the Brighton Bombing by the IRA, may never have come to pass.

1981 ONWARDS

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

Although the newly formed Social Democratic Party (SDP) was rising in popularity, it probably wouldn't have been able to form a government on its own. That's not to say it would not wield power. In alliance with the Liberal Party, it had shown it could attract votes. With a weak Labour leadership and a fractured Tory party, such an alliance could have squeezed enough votes to govern. If not, then a more traditional pact with either Conservatives or Labour as the power behind the throne, would have meant ‘Thatcherism’ lost its focus and its relevance.

1984

SOFT LINE NOT PICKET LINE

With British social and economic policy taking a more restrained route, a number of things may have been different. Through the influence of more moderate voices – either from within the Tories or from coalition partners – the push for privatisations of public utilities may never have got off the ground. And industrial relations may possibly have been far more conciliatory. In 1984, the threat to the coal industry through pit closures dominated the news, and the political agenda. Government and unions were locked in a war of attrition, and running battles on the picket lines have become a symbol of British politics of the day. But with a victory for Argentina in the Falklands, this time could all have been so different.

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What if...

OPERATION VALKYRIE HAD ASSASSINATED HITLER?

Desperate members of his closest circle seize one last chance to eliminate the Nazi leader and change the course of history

INTERVIEW WITH

Image courtesy of Roger Moorhouse

Roger Moorhouse

Moorhouse is an award-winning historian and author of the critically acclaimed *Killing Hitler: The Third Reich and the Plots against the Führer.*

By July 1944 the Allied armies were back on European soil. As they began to push east towards Germany, the Nazi conspirators of Operation Valkyrie triggered their plan to blow up Adolf Hitler. The reclusive and paranoid dictator was encircled by a ring of steel and secrecy within his Wolf's Lair complex in Eastern Prussia, which only the most trusted could penetrate. Numerous attempts to kill him had failed, but on 20 July 1944 it was within his own stronghold that a bomb in a briefcase came tantalisingly close to wiping out perhaps the most notorious dictator of the 20th century and changing the course of World War II.

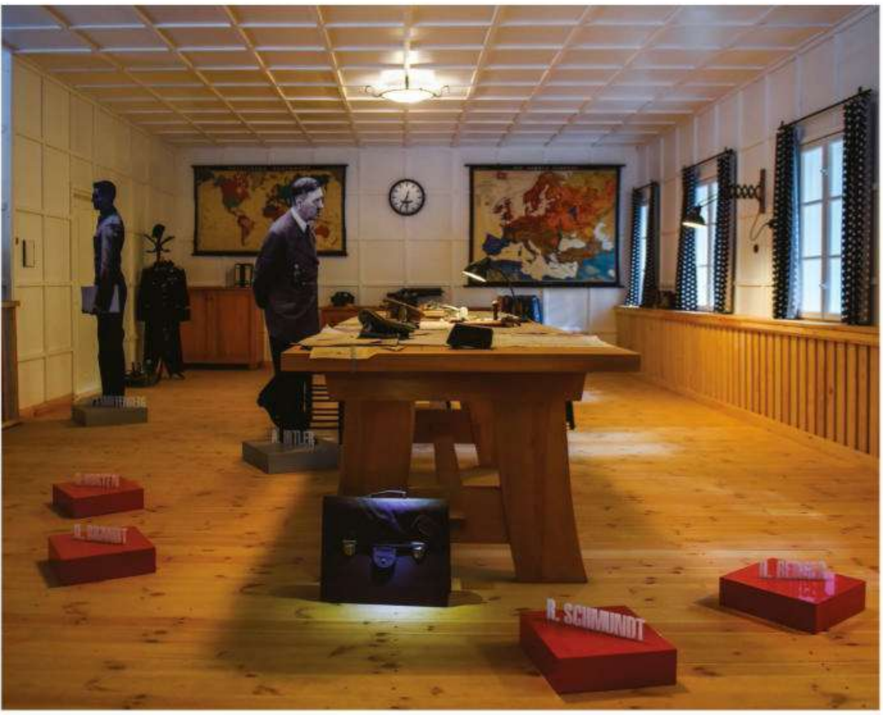
What made the conspirators of Operation Valkyrie believe they could succeed where previous attempts had failed?

I don't think the Valkyrie conspirators were necessarily more confident that they would succeed. As much as anything, theirs was a desperate act. It was a throw of the dice and a symbolic gesture – as one of their number said at the time – "to show that another Germany existed." What set them apart from the previous plots and attempts on Hitler's life was that they realised that it was no longer enough simply to assassinate their target. To achieve just this would leave a whole range of uncertainties and far too much to chance. They had to launch a coup to seize power as well. This made their task infinitely more complex and heightened the possibility of failure.

Of course, the great advantage that the Valkyrie conspirators had was that they had access to Hitler. By 1944, the German leader was a virtual recluse who was barely seen in public and had a highly refined and effective personal security regime. Anyone trying to target him would have to get through numerous levels of layered security checks, but a senior military officer coming to a briefing could avoid all that. What they were unable to plan for was the intervention of sheer chance. The briefcase containing the bomb was moved from its spot right next to Hitler, where it would've almost guaranteed his death, when Colonel Heinz Brandt inadvertently pushed it further under the table. He was just making room for himself, but in so doing the thick oak table leg shielded Hitler from the explosion. He escaped with just shredded trousers and a perforated eardrum. Those who'd plotted the bombing and attempted coup would eventually not be so fortunate.

Was there enough popular support, military strength and leadership to pull off a coup after Hitler's death? Would it have replaced bad with bad?

The civilian side of the plot was reasonably numerous and wide-ranging, but it is highly dubious that they could have taken power on 20 July, let alone held on to it. For one thing, the extent of popular



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RIGHT
This reconstruction shows Hitler's position and that of the briefcase containing the bomb

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EXTRA
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1 Fr.
Wednesday, May 2,
HITLER
DEAD

support [for an assassination and coup] is rather questionable. Of course, there were many ordinary Germans who were tired of the war by July 1944, and some of them might have felt freed from their loyalty to the regime by the death of Hitler, but such was the power of Nazi propaganda and control that I doubt it would have been enough to sustain the coup.

In addition, the coup plotters lacked the determination and grit to do what was necessary. Instead of executing their senior opponents, it seems they preferred to effectively inherit power by assassination. Anyone of senior rank in the public eye who was not eliminated would only be a rallying point for further unrest and resistance to change. So in reality their actions did not match the enormity of the task in hand. They had recognised the need to not only assassinate Hitler but also launch a coup to take control, but perhaps naively they convinced themselves that the demise of Hitler would somehow trigger a popular response that would take on its own momentum to meet their objectives. Had they been more brutal they might have had a better chance of success.

Is it possible there would have been a civil war in Germany?

Civil war was always a possibility, but it would have required some sort of popular uprising against Nazi rule. In order to achieve this, the plotters would've had to overcome some overwhelming challenges: the sheer weight of the years that the Nazi regime had been in power, the charismatic hold of Hitler himself that was still at the centre of the message (even though by this time he was rarely seen in public), and the reach and depth of the Nazi information and propaganda machine. And it could have led to a more fractured country with various and complex factions looking for an opportunity to gain from the unrest and uncertainty. As it was, the Valkyrie plotters needed to dupe most of the army units operating in their name into believing that they were acting in support of the Nazi regime, but that ruse would not have worked for more than a few hours. For any sort of prolonged confrontation to be won, the plotters would have needed a large slice of popular support.

Under what terms would the new leadership have surrendered to the Allies? Or would they have fought on, and with what possible outcome?

Had they managed to secure control of the levers of power, the coup plotters wanted to agree terms with the Western

THE PAST

1939

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED…

Assassination attempts on the German dictator were nothing new and there had been numerous other failed plots to dispose of him, such as in 1939 in a beer hall in Munich. A timebomb was planted, and the explosion killed others but not Hitler because he had already left the event. Other attempts over years, and their subsequent failures, only served to increase an eerie sense of invincibility, both in Hitler's own eyes and in those of the millions who looked to him for leadership, inspiration and strength.

JUNE 1944

ALLIES BACK IN EUROPE

With Operation Overlord on 6 June 1944 – D-Day – the tide of the war changed dramatically in favour of the Allies. It became increasingly clear that it was not a case of 'if' the Germans would lose the war, but 'when'. Becoming ever more withdrawn within a much-reduced inner circle of only his most trusted military advisors, a deluded Hitler continued to plan his strategy to repel the advancing Allies. But for many high-ranking German soldiers and officials, waiting for the Allies to rid them of Hitler was unthinkable – they had to grasp the moment for themselves.

JULY 1944

A PLAN IN TATTERS

Being so close to the Fuhrer was all in a day's work for Colonel Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg. That was the easy part. But for all the planning it was to be a stroke of fate that left the plot in ruins when the briefcase bomb under the table was moved at the last moment. As he fled the scene Von Stauffenberg made the fatal error of assuming Hitler was dead. Mixed messages flew around the airwaves, but it was not so. They had failed. Hitler had survived with only minor injuries and torn trousers. His retribution was swift, with the conspirators and thousands of other suspects rounded up and executed.

NSDAP
NSDAP

TOP-INSET
Field Marshal Errwin von Witzleben was executed along with other high-ranking conspirators

ABOVE
Nazi officials examine the aftermath of the explosion. Four people were killed but Hitler survived

LEFT
Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg was close to Adolf Hitler and planted the bomb

Powers while fighting on against the Soviets. But for any of that to be feasible, any terms had to be realistic, achievable and not imbalanced in such a way that Germany was merely just trying to soften the blow of defeat. It was from the east that the Germans feared for their future more than anything, from a Soviet Union that would inflict its revenge for what it had suffered at the hands of Nazi Germany. This was perhaps an understandable ambition from a German conservative perspective, but it flew in the face of the many expressions of Allied unity – not least the Casablanca Declaration of 1943, which demanded the unconditional surrender of Axis forces. In such circumstances, I think it's doubtful that any separate peace with the Allies would have been possible.

As the plot was before the 1945 Yalta Conference, how could its success have changed the Western Allies ambitions in relation to Germany and Russia? How would the map of Europe been affected? And what about Italy?

It is tempting to imagine that a seizure of power by the coup plotters in July 1944 could have caused profound change to the circumstances that we know played out. However, any significant change would have been dependent on the new German regime being able to persuade the Western Powers to effectively abandon their Soviet ally and sign up to a separate peace. It would also have relied heavily on how the new leaders of Germany were dealing with any possible domestic unrest caused by the coup. How would any unrest impact their ability to be effective partners, politically and militarily, in a rapidly conceived alliance against the Soviets? The Allies would also have to be convinced that the new leadership stood as one, with a single vision and determination which went beyond just a Germany without Hitler, or even Nazis. The idea of substantial change to the geo-political landscape post-coup, therefore, is a chimera, an unrealistic vision. The constellation of power ranged against Germany by 1944 was too great to effectively dismantle.

What would the impact on the war in the Far East have been and why?

There is a possibility that the war in the Far East might have seen some impact. Obviously the Allied forces were fighting on a separate front in a completely different part of the world, and with that came enormous logistical and tactical issues which extra forces could have helped to alleviate even a little. With a separate peace in Europe, it would theoretically have been possible for the United States to transfer more of its forces to the Pacific theatre, thereby bringing more pressure to bear on the Japanese. This in turn may have had some impact on how and when the Allies would and could have defeated Japan. Given enough time and resources it may have considered a full invasion of the Japanese mainland itself. One might speculate that a swifter Japanese collapse could have meant that deployment of the atomic bomb could have been avoided, and as such the actual use of such a weapon in combat would have remained very much on the drawing board as a theoretical and untried tactic.

However, given that any transfer of American troops would have likely taken months to put into effect, one must wonder whether the effect of such a shift might actually have been minimal.

THE POSSIBILITY

1944

FROM FOE TO FRIEND

Had the plot succeeded, it's possible (however remote) that the Germans may have surrendered and struck a deal with the Western Allies. From bitter experience the Germans knew just what kind of adversary the Russians could be, and they knew the terrible suffering inflicted by the Nazis would never be forgiven. If the Germans could somehow play on any doubts the West had about their Russian partners – and what they intended to gain from the war – then the Western Allies might, just might, be tempted to ally with Germany to keep the Russians out of Europe…

1945 – PRESENT

NOT-SO-COLD WAR

If the West had helped Germany escape the clutches of the Russian advance, perhaps persuaded by the inevitable division of territories and natural resources held by the Nazis around the world, then the present-day map of Europe may have looked very different. The possibilities seem endless: no Warsaw Pact countries, no Iron Curtain, no divided Germany and no Berlin Wall. The influence of the Soviet Union would be substantially diminished in the post-war era and the rising star of the United States would shine even more brightly.

1945

A DIFFERENT KIND OF SURRENDER

If the conflict in Europe had ended more quickly there could have been a dramatic impact on the war against Japan. In time, more troops, ships and armour could have been redeployed to the Far East to the point which, perhaps, an invasion of Japan itself would've been a distinct possibility. There would have been a much higher cost to pay in casualties on both sides, but if Japan had been overwhelmed by conventional forces then maybe the use of the atom bomb wouldn't have been necessary to bring about its surrender.

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What if...

ANNE BOLEYN HAD STAYED IN FRANCE?

Without the most infamous of Henry VIII's queens, Tudor England's religious and political landscape may have been entirely different

INTERVIEW WITH

© Amanda Ward

Hayley Nolan

Hayley Nolan is an historian and the author of *Anne Boleyn: 500 Years of Lies* (Little A, 2019). She launched the Be More Boleyn campaign with the Houses of Parliament.

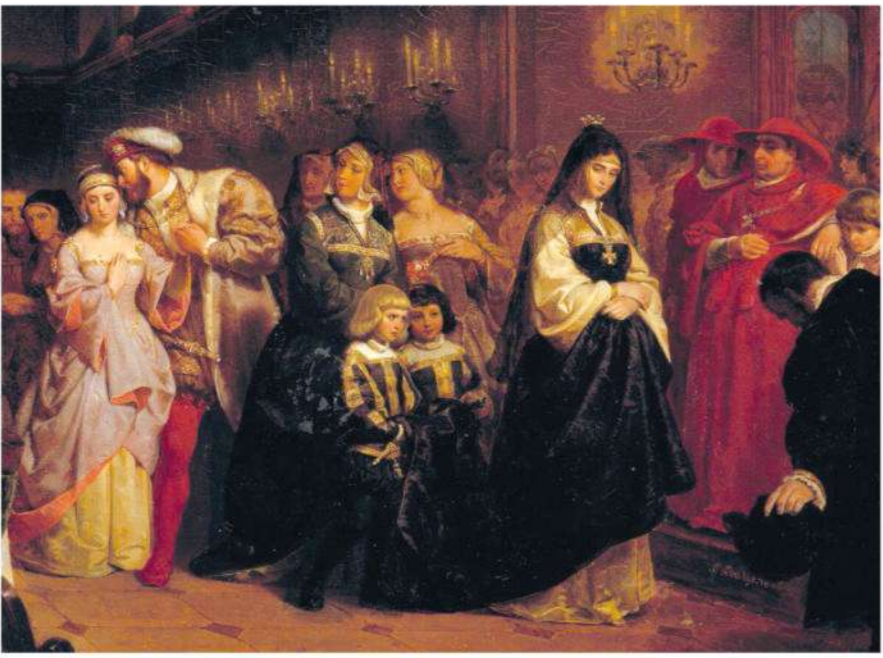
In 1522, Anne Boleyn returned to England from France, where she had spent part of her late childhood in the service of Queen Claude. Accomplished and desirable, Anne soon caught the eye of Henry VIII, and it was Anne for whom he left his wife of 23 years, Catherine of Aragon. The annulment sent ripples throughout England and immeasurably altered the religious and political face of the country. But was Anne's presence necessary for this change? And would the religious and anti-poverty activism identified by historian Hayley Nolan as a key feature of Anne's reign have materialised without her?

What might Anne's life in France have looked like if she had not returned to England in 1522?

It seems likely that after the death of her mistress, Queen Claude, in 1524 Anne would have gone on to work within the household of the French king's sister, Marguerite d'Angoulême. Alternatively she could have transferred to Claude's sister, Lady Renée, who was set to inherit the Duchy of Brittany. But knowing how controversial Anne's religious work became during her time in England - all of which was inspired by her radical upbringing among the reformists of the French courts - it's possible she would have become even more embroiled in the religious Reformation if she had stayed. With the recklessness we saw her display when challenging the oppressors of the Tudor Court, there is a high likelihood Anne would have wound up jailed in France for her activism, like the reformists she rescued as Queen of England. Her chaplain, William Latymer, spoke of Anne saving French humanist poet and religious reformer Nicholas Bourbon when he was jailed in 1533 for his provocative book *Nugae*. Anne's amnesty also included rescuing Mr Sturmius, a reformist scholar in Paris jailed in 1534, and a Mrs Marye in France who was also jailed for her religion. So perhaps Anne would have lived just as short a life in France due to her relentless passion for the evangelical cause, or perhaps it would have fallen to Marguerite d'Angoulême to save her.

Would Henry VIII still have left Catherine of Aragon for another woman? And if Henry's second wife had given birth to a son, would Henry have continued to marry several times?

It's a misconception that Henry VIII left Catherine of Aragon for Anne Boleyn. We have evidence that Henry was looking into leaving Catherine long before he turned his attention to Anne. Wolsey went to France to meet with Queen Claude's sister Lady Renée as a possible new bride for the king while secretly enquiring about an annulment. This was corroborated by the Bishop of Lincoln, John Longland, who heard mutterings of divorce as early as 1522. So I believe Henry could very well have followed through with the annulment, even if Anne wasn't in the picture. The fact that



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RIGHT Henry may have courted a different woman

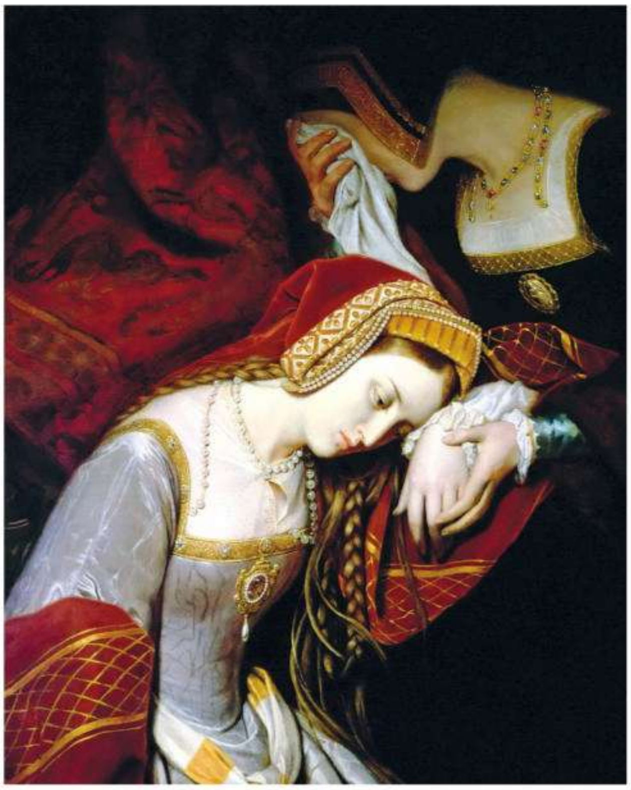
Main image source: © Alamy, © Getty Images

What if…

ANNE BOLEYN HAD STAYED IN FRANCE?

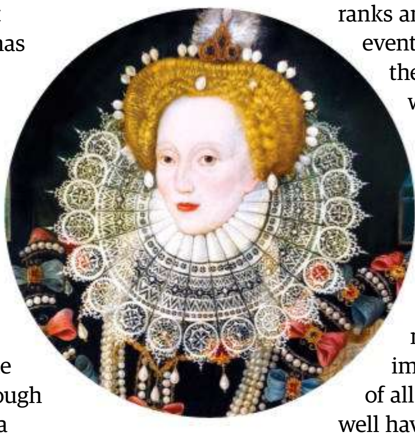
Henry was seeking a divorce when he had no firm replacement bride lined up proves his desperate need for a son was driving him more than his lust for another woman. And although France was against the idea of Henry re-marrying without papal approval, it's possible England may have won them round eventually. So if he had succeeded in marrying Lady Renée and she had produced Henry's hallowed son, then there would be no motivation for him to remarry. In fact, we know he would have been reluctant to, just as he was following Jane Seymour's death. He had his son, so it took the king's advisors two years to cajole Henry into a new marriage to Anne of Cleves for political reasons, compared to the 11 days it took him to marry Jane Seymour after executing Anne Boleyn.

Would the Break from Rome have happened and what, if any, impact would there have been on religion in England without Anne's presence?
If Henry was still adamant on an annulment but there was no future wife waiting in the wings, perhaps Henry would have been cowed by his advisors into striking a deal with Rome. The Duke of Norfolk was actively plying the Venetians with trade deals to gain their support and avoid a war, so perhaps, with a little more time, they would have come to an amicable agreement for an annulment. But how much religious reform would have taken place in England if they were still tied to Rome? England already had reformists such as Robert Barnes and Bible translator William Tyndale, but both were driven into exile. Reform within the Church required someone in a position of power to champion it – which, judging by the work she undertook in her reign, is why Anne Boleyn accepted the king's marriage proposal in the first place. Without Anne, we wouldn't have had Thomas Cranmer, who she appointed as Archbishop of Canterbury. After Anne's death it was he who wrote to Henry VIII begging he continue his support for reform. It was also Archbishop Cranmer who petitioned the king, through Cromwell as intermediary, to introduce the first English Bible. With the growing unrest in Europe, someone would have eventually broken through the ranks, as Anne did, but I have a feeling it would have had to fall to the next generation. Even though Cromwell championed reform later in his career, when Martin Luther was calling out the abuse of Church indulgences, Cromwell was petitioning the pope that same year, in 1517, to sell indulgences of his own.



ABOVE
Anne could have ended up imprisoned in France

What might have happened within Henry VIII's court without the influence of Anne Boleyn? Would figures like Cardinal Wolsey and Thomas More have continued to serve in Henry's government?
If Henry was somehow persuaded to stay with Catherine of Aragon, then advisors such as Wolsey and More would have remained. Knowing how ruthless Cromwell was in overthrowing Anne Boleyn, there is no doubt he still would have risen through the ranks and replaced his master, Wolsey, eventually. During his time under the cardinal, Cromwell was tasked with converting six monasteries into Cardinal College in Oxford. When he discovered the money that could be made, Cromwell was commanded to dissolve a further 30 monasteries to fund Wolsey's Ipswich Grammar school. So even though they may not have had a reason to implement a widespread dissolution of all monasteries, Cromwell may very well have gone on to propose a partial dissolution styled as 'streamlining' to fund the country's defences and any future wars, as neither were cheap.



ABOVE
Elizabeth I would never have been born

THE PAST

1522-30

COURTLY LOVE

After Anne arrived back at the English court she was not short of suitors. Her flirtations with Henry Percy and Thomas Wyatt dominated her attention until 1526 when the king began to show an interest in her. It is not known for certain when the two first met, but by 1527 Henry was openly trying to get his marriage to Catherine of Aragon annulled. Cardinal Wolsey's failure to get an annulment for Henry from the pope led to him being accused of treason. He died in 1530, before he could face trial. Henry remained determined to marry Anne.

1531-33

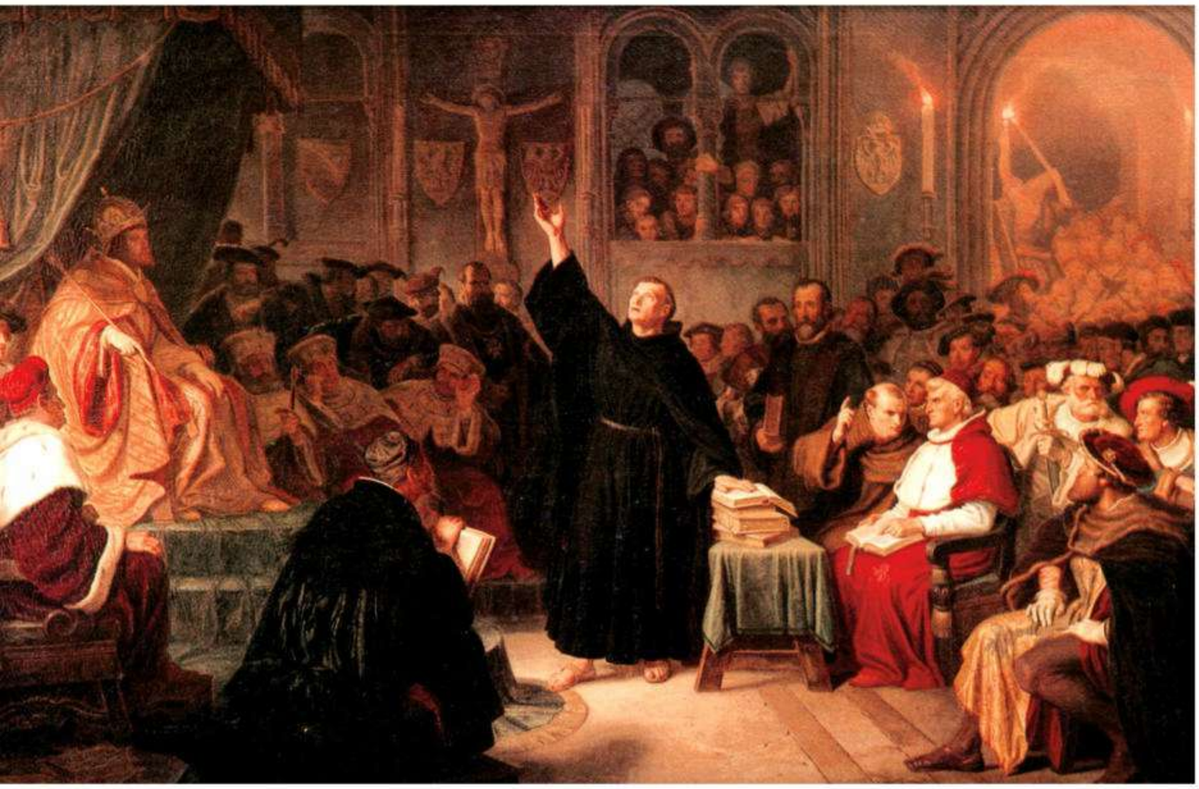
MARRIAGE TO THE KING

In 1531 Pope Clement VII threatened Henry with excommunication if he married Anne. Henry argued that his current marriage went against the teachings of the Bible, which he claimed banned a man from marrying his brother's widow (Catherine had previously been married to Henry's older brother, Arthur, before his death in 1502). However, the pope would not concede and so Henry married Anne in secret in November 1532 and then held a public ceremony in January 1533. Henry's marriage to Catherine was annulled by the new Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer in May 1533.

1533-36

A SHORT REIGN

Anne served as queen of England for three years, during which time her family grew to be influential figures at the English court. She gave birth to Princess Elizabeth in September 1533 but did not have any more children, which continued Henry's frustration at not having a son and heir. Anne championed evangelicalism as queen, while Henry broke away from the papacy and set up the Church of England, of which he was the supreme head. Henry began to grow tired of Anne, who had suffered several miscarriages, and accused her of adultery. She was executed on 19 May 1536.



ABOVE
The Reformation and the influence of Martin Luther would have reached England

Is it possible that the Boleyns and the Howards would still have become such prominent and influential families without Anne's position as queen of England?

It's widely assumed that Anne's father Thomas Boleyn achieved his peerage through his daughters' affairs with the king. But Thomas' royal career was extensive and high-profile enough to require no acts of nepotism in order to achieve the status he did. Without Anne, it's highly likely the Boleyn men would still have risen. George Boleyn became a parliamentarian and ambassador at a young age, advanced undoubtedly due to his sister's influence, but George always had ambitions to follow in his father's footsteps and so would have still ascended but on a slower trajectory. The Boleyns might even have eclipsed the Howards in history for all the right reasons. Anne's uncle, Thomas Howard, the 3rd Duke of Norfolk, had been pushed into near retirement by Wolsey, kept away from court for years on end. It was only when Anne accepted the king's proposal that he returned, without which the Howards may have faded into obscurity.

What might Tudor England and the Tudor dynasty have looked like without the existence of Anne's daughter Elizabeth I?

It is not just Elizabeth I who wouldn't have existed without Anne Boleyn, but there would be no Edward VI, as Anne Boleyn paved the way for Henry to marry Jane Seymour. She set the precedent for kings once again marrying commoners, and although Jane served Catherine of Aragon and was part of Henry's royal circle, as an ardent Catholic herself who only replaced Anne Boleyn to see the monarchy return to Catholicism, she and her faction would have had no ammunition to pursue Henry this time round. Also, without Anne or Elizabeth I, England wouldn't have had its first effective Poor Law. As my corrective biography of Anne proved, Anne Boleyn was a religious activist who championed poor relief in England. Though history calls it 'Cromwell's Poor Law', it was Anne Boleyn and her protégé William Marshall who introduced it to the king, and the king who assigned Cromwell to develop it with them. But when Anne proposed she establish a rival government council to oversee the new scheme – consisting of a Tudor 'Job Centre' and free healthcare – it appears that Cromwell sabotaged the revolutionary Poor Law by replacing it with a drastically diluted version consisting of donation boxes and a ban on begging. However, it turns out parts of the Elizabethan Poor Law were replicated word for word from Marshall and Anne's abandoned original and revolutionary draft document. Elizabeth continuing her mother's legacy would never have happened if Anne had remained in France.

THE POSSIBILITY

1522

THE KING'S HEAD IS TURNED

With Henry desperate for a son and heir, he probably would have begun to look for a suitable new wife even if he hadn't met Anne. He may have found that with a foreign princess, or within his own court as Henry was known to have taken several mistresses, including Anne's sister, Mary Carey (nee Boleyn). One of these women may have been Henry's next queen, and may have given him his much-desired son. If this had happened, Henry may never have married again and he may have lived the rest of his life content with his wife and children – and probably a few mistresses.

1522

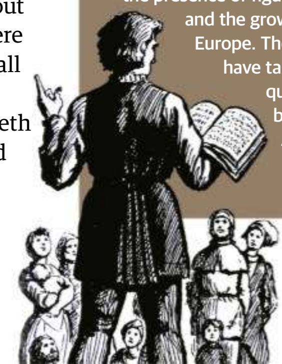
SHORT-LIVED ACTIVISM

Anne's ambition and capabilities as an intelligent woman may have seen her life take a similar course in France as it had in England. If Anne had pursued her religious activism in France, she may have been jailed for associating with prominent reformists and being involved in the dissemination of reformist ideas. However, without her position as queen of England, it is hard to say how much freedom and influence Anne would have held at the French court. Her ability to participate in reform would have been dependent on the status of her husband, or of the fondness her mistress felt for her.

1522

RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION

Had Henry's need to divorce Catherine of Aragon arisen without Anne's presence at court, it is highly likely that he would have still encountered resistance from the papacy. Tensions between England and Rome had been steadily rising but careful negotiations may have seen the issue resolved. However, reform may still have come to England due to the presence of figures like William Tyndale and the growing sense of unrest in Europe. The Reformation may not have taken hold in England as quickly if Henry had not been desperate to marry Anne, but some form of religious unrest would have occurred.



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What if...

JAPAN HAD REMAINED ISOLATIONIST?

While Japan keeps its distance, overall supremacy of the region could be up for grabs

INTERVIEW WITH

© Felicity Millward

Dr Christopher Harding

Christopher Harding is a historian and broadcaster based at Edinburgh University. His latest book is *The Japanese: A History In Twenty Lives* and he writes the IlluminAsia newsletter: **illuminasia.org**

For centuries Japan had looked inward rather than out into the wider world. There had been relative peace, and a way of life that enabled a thriving population to feel comfortable in its culture and beliefs, untainted by Western influence. But in many ways the regime was harsh and unforgiving so, inevitably, things were bound to change. But if that change had not come, or come more slowly, what would the real difference have been to Japan itself, and what impact would its continued isolation have had on the region and the wider world?

What did Japan have that the world wanted?

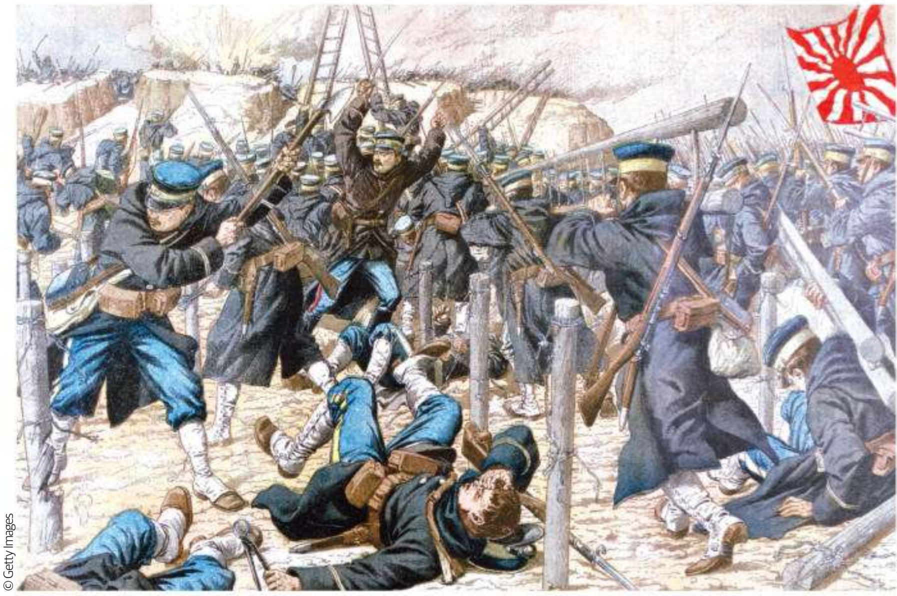
Not very much, which was why the world's great powers had for the most part left Japan alone up until the 1850s. It wasn't a land of fabled riches, as India was. Nor were there expected to be particularly exciting trading opportunities, as was the case with China. During Japan's period of relative isolation from the West, which began when contact was severed with Spain and Portugal in the early 1600s, the only trade with Western countries was with the Dutch. That trade pootled along nicely for 200 years or so, but didn't generate the kind of green-eyed envy back in Europe that might have led other countries to try to muscle in.

What, then, changed in the 1850s? An important part of the picture was the United States expanding westward to the point where its neighbours across the Pacific started to be of interest – both diplomatically, and in terms of assisting American shipping if it got into trouble in waters around Japan. The Russians, too, had been expanding their empire in Japan's direction, while British and French involvement in China rendered Japan of greater interest than in the past. No great power wanted to be left behind if trading and diplomatic relations with Japan were going to be established by a rival, so once things got going the momentum then became unstoppable.

What would an isolationist government of Japan have looked like with the backdrop of a modernising world?

One sign of how things might have been comes to us from 1860, when the Tokugawa shogunate was still in power and they sent an embassy to the United States. Photographs show samurai with their kimono and swords sitting alongside American counterparts in Western dress. Diary accounts of the embassy suggest that the Japanese visitors struggled to enjoy Western food – from 'greasy soup' to the sacrilege of rice cooked in butter – or to understand Western politics: why did the family of George Washington not still dominate the US government?

My guess is that these cultural attitudes – to food, dress, politics and the roles of men and women in society – would have survived for a while if Japan had remained isolated, even while it perhaps engaged in limited trade with the West. Western encroachment into East Asia made that kind of trade inevitable: the Japanese were well aware that European countries like Britain were using superiority in firepower to bend China to their will, and they were keen to avoid that same fate. So a modest



© Getty Images

RIGHT Russia was humiliated by the Japanese victory

Main image source: © Getty Images

金龍山
KEEP OUT
松下電器
NOTICE
UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS
KEEP OUT

THE PAST

1603 – 1850s

TIME OF THE SHOGUN

From a fractured, warring nation, to one of relative peace through isolation from the majority of the rest of the political and economic world. The ruling dynasty of the Tokugawa shogunate was in many ways a velvet fist in an iron glove; movement in and out of the country was fiercely restricted, as was the visits of foreigners and any information from the outside world. Japan was able to settle into its own cultural and social identity. But the world was knocking on its door and wanted to come in.

1853 – 1868

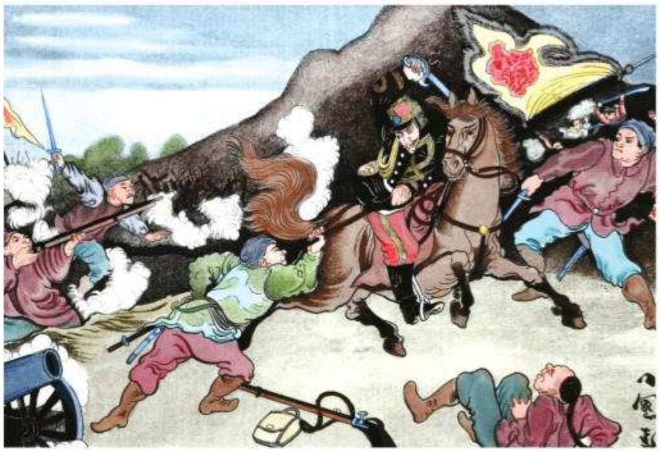
THE WORLD COMES CALLING

In 1853 the expedition of Commodore Matthew Perry was to add fuel to the already dwindling support for the shogunate and a move towards support for the Imperial family. His objective was to open Japanese ports to American trade; diplomatically, if possible, but with the threat of military force if necessary. In some ways he was pushing at an opening door, with a desire building in Japan to have more access to the wider world. Gunboat diplomacy lit the fuse and won the day and by 1868 the Tokugawa shogunate was no more.

1868 ONWARDS

THE MEIJI REVOLUTION

As Japan embraced Imperial government and an opening up to foreign trade, influence and support, its meteoric rise as an industrial powerhouse had begun. With rapid industrialisation it soon found itself in great demand to feed the insatiable appetite that had exploded in the West for all things oriental, be it porcelain, art, architecture, or plants. Japan also started to find its feet as a military power, firstly within, through the reform of the samurai and their status in the hierarchy of class, and the creation of the Imperial Japanese Army. It would not be long before Japan turned its attention on its neighbours, China, and Russia.



TOP
An isolated Japan would not have been a regional aggressor

ABOVE
China's Qing dynasty was no match for the Japanese army

trade, sufficient to bring in the funds and technological know-how required to upgrade Japan's self-defence and thus guarantee their independence, would undoubtedly have developed.

More difficult to predict are the cultural outcomes. The Tokugawa shogunate (1603 - 1868) was at pains to control the flow of information into Japan, about the outside world, and to set limits on political discourse within Japan. If Japan had opened up to limited trade alone, perhaps with some foreign experts welcomed into the country, it might not have been long before news and books about democratic change in France or Britain began to circulate, too – alongside stirring histories of the American Revolution. That doesn't mean that people in Japan would necessarily have regarded any of these foreign systems as right for their country. But it might have created pressure for a degree of political change within Japan. The best-case scenario, from the point of view of the Tokugawa shoguns, would have been a high-tech Japan adhering to traditional values and accepting traditional patterns of leadership as good and natural.

How might an isolationist policy have impacted the balance of political power regionally and globally?
It is possible that Tsarist Russia might have dominated East Asia to a greater extent, in particular the Korean peninsula, which was politically weak in the late 19th century. That, in turn, might have brought Russia close to British and French interests in China, potentially leading to conflict of some kind and even the de facto partitioning of China. The United States, too, had trading interests in China, making it all the more easy to imagine China becoming the focus of serious tensions in the region.

What would be the social and cultural gains and losses of isolation for the people of Japan?
If you had asked that question back in 1905, when a successfully modernised Japan had just defeated a great power, a

lot of people in Japan would have said that they had made huge gains since 1868 – in education, science, technology, prosperity and culture – and that they would not want these to have been lost through isolation.

Though if you ask that same question in the summer of 1945, at the tragic end of a war that some in Japan were inclined to believe had roots in Japan's opening to a meddling Western world back in the 1860s, you would have found people wishing fervently for the peaceful, less complicated hey-day of the Tokugawa shogunate. Japan then, they would have said, had been largely free of conflict, and people had had a clear sense of who they were – as a culture and a society. Opening to the West had given rise to a weaving of 'modernising' with 'Westernising', which was impossible to unpick once the process had begun. So it depends on who you ask, and when.

What are the potential consequences Japan's isolation would have on global trade and economics?

I think this impact would have been minimal, even if Japan had maintained a very strict isolation and had only traded with the Dutch, among the Western powers. Japan produced fine crafts for export – textiles, products in wood, great art – but it was (and remains) relatively poor in terms of natural resources. Culturally, an isolationist Japan would have been a loss to the world. Looked at in terms of pure economics, however, I'm not sure that there would have been much of a difference.

Would world powers have allowed Japan to remain isolated, and if not, what would they potentially have done about it?

The big fear among Japanese who advocated for opening up their country in the 1850s and 1860s was that the tenor of global politics was now such that no country could avoid having relations of some kind with the major players like Great Britain. The only question, they argued, was who got to set the terms of that relationship.

China had, for centuries, been a kind of political and cultural big brother to Japan, so it was truly shocking for the Japanese to see what a policy of isolation had done to that country. Add to that the fact that Russian and American power was extending towards East Asia in this period – America westwards across the Pacific; Russia eastwards – and it is unthinkable that given Japan's location and geography these powers would have left it entirely alone. This was the era of 'gunboat diplomacy', after all.

I expect that you would have seen elevated talk of free trade alongside British, American and other warships sailing in and out of Japanese harbours, either trying to strike deals with regional lords – who held significant power in Japan, at this point – or making violent threats. After all, when the American commodore Matthew C Perry arrived in 1853, seeking diplomatic relations, he was very clear that when he returned the following year for an answer to his overture he expected to hear a 'yes' – or else there would be war. That tells you pretty much all you need to know about the geopolitical culture of this period.

RIGHT
The Meiji emperor Mutsuhito was a figurehead over a Western-style government

THE POSSIBILITY

1894

NO BROKEN CHINA

Should Japan have remained isolated, at least in part, then its regional ambitions may well have been very different. The conflict with China over Korea in 1894-5 may never have happened. The humiliation of the actual war caused the Chinese Qing dynasty untold damage, which may have been avoided altogether if Japan had not been an aggressor. If Chinese political and military reformers had not had the example of a successfully modernising Japan across the water, the Qing imperial dynasty might have survived rather longer than it did.

1904 – 1917

HALF A REVOLUTION

Despite Japan's emerging overseas ambitions, Imperial Russian defeat by the developing military nation was regarded as preposterous by the Tsar. The humiliation for the Russian people was difficult to take, and unrest soon spread. Although quashed by the Imperial forces, the seed for further, even more menacing conflict had been sown. Lenin referred to 1905 as a 'dress rehearsal'. But if Japan had not broken its relative isolation to realise regional ambitions, the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5 may not have happened; there would have been no shock of Russian defeat and perhaps no revolution in Russia in 1905.

1941 – 1980

GAMING OVER

If we really wanted to test our imaginations, then a relatively isolated Japan, developing and modernising more slowly, may not have had the ambition or strength to attack Pearl Harbor in 1941, thereby keeping the USA out of the war, and leaving the Nazis to control Western Europe. Furthermore, without the financial support from the US and Allies to rebuild post-war, and their own passion to do so, Japan's meteoric industrialisation may never have happened. There would be no mass market revolutionary electronics that became the mainstay of a whole generation, and which paved the way for the high-tech world in which we now live.

Nintendo GAME BOY

All images: © Alamy

What if...

CHERNOBYL HAD NOT BEEN CONTAINED?

Already the world's worst nuclear catastrophe, just how much more deadly could it have been?

INTERVIEW WITH

© A Leatherbarrow

Andrew Leatherbarrow

Andrew is the author of *Chernobyl 01:23:40; The Incredible True Story of the World's Worst Nuclear Disaster.* His latest book is *Melting Sun: The History of Nuclear Power in Japan and the Disaster at Fukushima Daiichi.*

Few accidents in history occupy the kind of legendary, pop-culture status as the devastating Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986. With thousands killed or injured – by acute radiation syndrome among the first responders, and then later via cancer and other health problems among the wider populace, it's hard to imagine how it could have been worse. Chernobyl housed four of the largest nuclear reactors ever built, each with over twice the fuel load of a typical Western design, which allowed it to disgorge a phenomenal volume of radioactive materials. But if we bend reality, ignore the 'how' and skip to the 'what,' it's interesting to see how events might have been different.

What catastrophic failings would lead to the Chernobyl disaster being worse than it was?

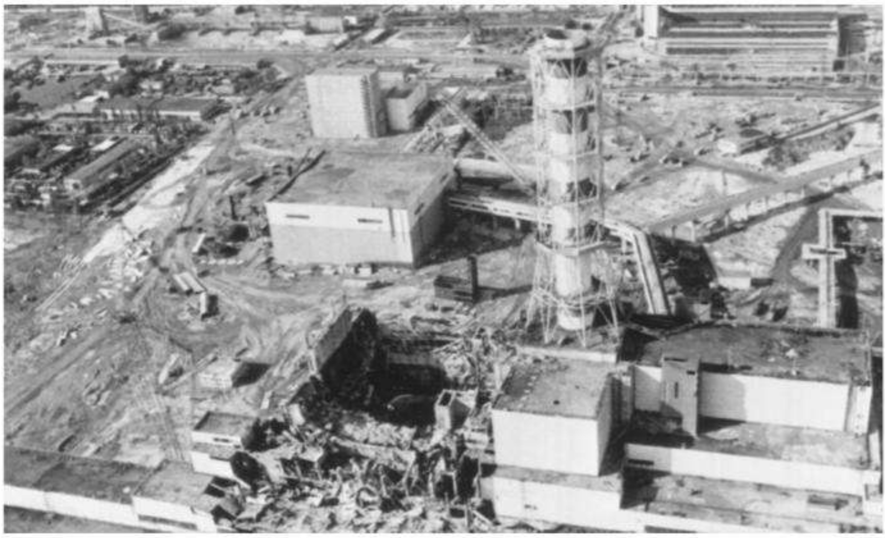
There are a couple of things that could have made it worse. Chernobyl's Unit 4 reactor building held an enormous tank of cooling water directly beneath the reactor vessel. In reality, plant workers worried that the melting reactor core could slump down into this tank and trigger an enormous steam explosion, far more powerful than the initial blast. They made a desperate bid to both drain the tank and smother the burning reactor fire by using military helicopters to drop bags of sand, lead, and fission-dampening boron. Most of these missed the target, but if more struck home, they could have further dislodged the already damaged lower 'lid' of the reactor, allowing molten fuel to pour out and potentially into the undrained water tank. The resulting explosion wouldn't have vaporised half of Europe, as some thought, but it would have caused significant further damage to the already battered reactor building. The reinforced concrete structure would probably contain much of the blast, but it may have compromised the Unit 3 reactor housed inside the same building, and caused additional fires in the turbine hall, which linked each reactor building. If operators lost the ability to cool the decay heat of Unit 3, it could have potentially melted down and released more radioactive materials.

How would the Soviet Union's view of the world have influenced how it dealt with the catastrophe?

The Soviet political elite were always obsessed with appearances and presenting themselves as the best at everything, even back in the days of Lenin and Stalin. They were unwilling to admit any mistakes, wishing to be seen as equals to their capitalist peers, and Chernobyl was no different.

Local police and KGB agents quickly isolated the entire area, preventing ordinary people – and rumours – from entering or leaving. The Western public only learned of what happened because winds carried airborne radioactive particles north-west, where they drifted over Belarus, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia before being detected at a Swedish nuclear facility.

With an event as extreme as this, if it had been worse, the political response wouldn't have changed; there would still be the classic denials and downplaying typical of previous incidents. Gorbachev still enjoyed widespread approval, so there was no weakness on his part.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RIGHT
The explosion in Reactor 4 released deadly radioactive material directly into the atmosphere

What if…
CHERNOBYL HAD NOT BEEN CONTAINED?

THE PAST

FEBRUARY 1986

OVERLY OPTIMISTIC

Around 96 kilometres (60 miles) north of the Ukrainian capital of Kiev and close to the Belarus border, the Chernobyl nuclear power complex has a much larger capacity than its Western counterparts. With reactors 3 and 4 completed and commissioned by 1983, it becomes fully functional. Such is the pride and confidence of the authorities in the complex that in February 1986, Vitali Sklyarov, Ukraine's minister of power and electrification, states that the odds of a meltdown at Chernobyl are "one in 10,000 years."

25/26 APRIL 1986

FAILING THE TEST

On 25 April preparations are made to run a test of an emergency cooling system in a scenario involving complete loss of power. Beginning just after 1.23am on 26 April, in less than a minute the build-up of steam in Reactor 4 causes an explosion powerful enough to rip a 1,000 ton lid off volatile fuel elements, releasing radiation into the air. Debris falls onto Reactor 3's roof and several fires break out. First responder firefighters attending have no experience of radiation and wear no protective equipment. Reactor 3 is shut down at 5am and Reactors 1 and 2 about 24 hours later.

© Alamy

27 APRIL – 26 MAY 1986

TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

On 27 April, emergency response teams arrive and evacuations are instigated within a ten-kilometre (six-mile) radius of the complex. On 28 April, the Soviet Union admits an accident has occurred but gives little detail. Radioactive material from Chernobyl is detected at a Swedish nuclear plant and the world is aware that something catastrophic may have happened. Incredibly, May Day parades still take place in Kiev despite the huge amounts of radiation escaping from the plant. On 14 May, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev speaks of the accident on national television. He mobilises thousands of military reservists to help with the clean-up operation. Many will die from radiation-related illness.

To see obvious changes, we must alter the wind direction, thereby changing where the radiation goes. If it blew east, deep into the USSR, the inclination toward secrecy would remain unchallenged for far longer because those particles would have to circle half the globe before being detected by a non-Soviet power. A devastating radiation release in Chelyabinsk in 1957 was kept secret for decades, and the politburo would attempt this again. After all, they went ahead with the May 1986 festivities in Kyiv days after the accident, pretending that nothing serious had happened a mere 100 kilometres (62 miles) away.

If things had been worse, what would the impact have been on things such as the region, the environment, the population, numbers of dead and long-term sickness?

It's impossible to estimate health numbers in a worse accident, given that the statistics for the accident we did get are so contentious. In general, the world scientific community has found that the estimates made for Chernobyl in the late 1980s turned out to be quite conservative, and they no longer believe as many people contracted cancer from radiation as was initially expected.

However, there's plenty of leeway for speculation because only around three to five per cent of Unit 4's reactor fuel was ejected from the core. What if we make it ten per cent, or 15, or 50? The USSR undertook extensive measures to clean the local environment around Chernobyl, but increasing the intensity by this much will disrupt that.

At this level, using soldiers and bulldozers to decontaminate the area will probably be out of the question for vast swathes of northern Ukraine and southern Belarus, meaning more would have to be done from the air. Hundreds of pilots flew back from the Afghan War to drop coagulating compounds around the worst-hit areas, but the numbers required for a worse scenario would dwarf those and potentially put a strain on the Soviet VVS [the Soviet air force] presence in the Middle East. Airframes would fast become contaminated beyond further use, and the military could be forced to dispose of thousands of helicopters within months.

It would also be impossible to enclose the stricken reactor building the way they did in 1986. Some new method would have to be devised, which could take years.

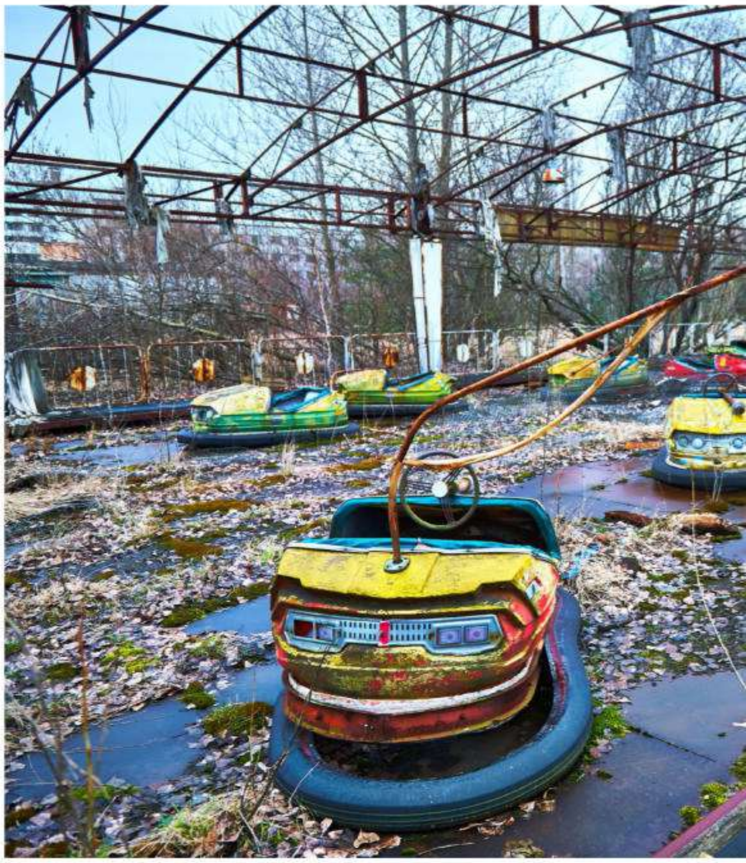
One positive change would be the faster evacuation of local civilians. Faced with such extreme levels of radiation and a dearth of personnel qualified to use the limited supply of dosimeters for mapping radiation dispersal, the authorities would have to move far more than the 135,000 civilians who were actually moved.

It may be decided to evacuate the urban centres closest to the dispersal path, although nowadays this option is thought to often cause more problems than it solves. People imagine radiation is more harmful than it actually is, so it can be better to stay put. If governments (Soviet and otherwise) did evacuate, the numbers could reach into the millions if the wind blew south over nearby Kyiv, creating a refugee crisis for which the USSR was ill-prepared. With nowhere to go, most people would end up in camps, at least in the short-medium term, where their mental health would rapidly deteriorate, as happened at Fukushima in 2011.

How much land could have been impacted, and what would the global social and economic implications be?

The weather is the main limiting factor. If the accident had occurred in the rainy season, radioactive particles would come down with the rain without spreading too far. Unfortunately, it occurred in

BELOW
Residents had to leave where they lived, never to return



spring amidst glorious dry weather, and hence spread far and wide. With clear skies and strong winds, the accident had the potential to contaminate most of Europe. Millions of square kilometres of agricultural land would have had to be sterilised.

If the winds blew south and east from day one, radioactive particles would more heavily contaminate most of Ukraine and Georgia, the USSR's main source of corn and wheat. Ukraine's fertile lands were critical to the USSR, which experienced food shortages throughout its existence and whose population had a diet heavily dependent on bread. Worse, milk drunk from grazing animals was the main source of human contamination in the months following April 1986. If the disaster was worse, it would prompt banning the consumption of milk and meat in affected areas, which, combined with the loss of grains and vegetables, could have spiralled into a famine. This would last for several years at minimum, though lessening each year. This is the only area where Gorbachev might have swallowed his pride and asked for Western aid.

Refugees would probably have fled into Europe in numbers impossible to contain. Such a mass migration could have fractured the Soviet Union earlier than what happened in reality.

> “The Soviet political elite were always obsessed with appearances and presenting themselves as the best at everything”

What extra action for containment could the world powers take?
Probably none that they didn't take anyway. The Cold War may have been thawing, but it was still frosty in 1986. Affected governments could intensify decontamination efforts, but beyond diplomatic pressure they'd be powerless to force the USSR to do anything, lest they risk military escalation.

What would the future of nuclear power look like after such a disaster?
Excitement for nuclear power had already nose-dived since the optimism of the 1950s. Orders for new reactors in the US slowed to a trickle after the Three Mile Island accident frightened half the population of Pennsylvania in 1979, and Chernobyl all but closed the taps. The move to cleaner and greener renewable energy was still many years away.

It's possible that a significantly worse accident could have galvanised popular opposition to nuclear energy and ended its use, but given the vast differences between the USSR and the West – politically, culturally, and scientifically; differences that were emphasised at the time to argue against this exact outcome – it seems almost impossible. More European powers may have converted back to coal sooner, but the US would continue to place its faith in oil and coal.

BELOW The first responder firefighters were woefully ill-equipped and unprepared

THE POSSIBILITY

1986-91

EMPTY BREAD BASKET

Had much more radioactive material leaked, and very different weather conditions been in place, the possibility of a far wider – and more densely populated – region being directly affected would see the fertile state of Ukraine reduced to a barren wasteland. Crops would fail, livestock and their produce contaminated, and the Soviet people, who rely so heavily on Ukraine to keep it fed, left in desperation as to how they will survive the catastrophe. With such a huge blow to the internal economy the big question would be whether the ice curtain of the Cold War would thaw sufficiently for the USSR to ask for international aid.

1986-87

A TRAGIC TIDE

The scale and speed of response would be a lesson learned; not only to the danger from the reactor, but also evacuation of the population. Potentially thousands of lives could be saved from the death sentence of radiation sickness if more were evacuated. But such a huge displacement of people would bring its own problems. Where would they go, and how far? Political borders are of no interest to those desperate to survive, but with hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of radiation refugees migrating into other parts of Russia and Europe, political decisions for their welfare would have to be made.

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1986 ONWARDS

DIG… DIG… DIG

Championed as a clean and efficient source of energy, the harnessing of nuclear power has been endorsed by nations around the world. But following such a tragic disaster, the silent nuclear threat becomes all too apparent, and confidence drops like a stone. The threat of global warming and the use of clean renewable energy are, in the 1980s, almost inaudible whispers compared to the roars of the oil and coal industries. Nuclear power is a gamble for politicians, a roll of the dice that can end in thousands of deaths. Fossil fuels win; more coal is dug, more oil drilled. Any thoughts of the threat to the planet are for the future, for someone else.

What if...

THE 1929 WALL STREET CRASH HAD BEEN AVERTED?

A seismic financial shock wave ruins the hopes and dreams of millions and turns boom to bust

INTERVIEW WITH

© Martin Levenson

Alex Woolf

Alex has written more than 200 books on a wide range of subjects, including the Wall Street Crash. His *The History of the World* has sold over 100,000 copies.

The 'Roaring Twenties' in the USA was a decade of a self-indulgence, parties, movie stars, ragtime and bright tomorrows. The growing pains of the New World and the gloom and despair of WWI were left behind. The US was finding its feet as the financial powerhouse of the world, the land of opportunity where everything was possible for anyone willing to grasp it. Everyone, it seems, wanted a slice of the cake. Gripped with the excitement of stocks and shares, ordinary Americans risked their hard-earned dollars. But whether stockbroker or man in the street, corporation or country, risk can lead to ruin...

What were the main causes of the crash? Could it have been avoided or was it inevitable?

The 1929 Wall Street Crash was not the first case of financial mass hysteria to hit the US economy, and certainly wasn't the last. The 1920s was boom time in the USA. There was a spirit of optimism in the country and a willingness to take risks for financial reward. It became fashionable to play the stock market. People rushed to invest in the corporate giants of the modern world: General Motors, DuPont, Wright Aeronautical and Radio Corporation of America. As a result, share prices rocketed. When shares in the most popular companies became harder to come by, people began putting their money in investment trusts (ITs), today known as mutual funds, which held stock in hundreds of different companies. ITs were managed by financial experts and seemed to take a lot of the risk out of investing. The stampede to invest in ITs pushed share prices so high they soon represented a value far in excess of the total worth of their companies' assets.

This was now a 'mania' – a period when everyone, from wealthy financiers to common investors, lost touch with reality and seemed to believe that prices could keep rising forever. ITs performed extremely well on a rising market. But when the crash came, investors would discover they could perform just as spectacularly in reverse, shrinking to a fraction of their former value.

Was the crash avoidable? Probably not. Speculative manias, once they get going, gather their own momentum. Usually, the people with the power to end a mania are the ones most caught up in the frenzy.

Was there anything that made it unique from other economic disasters?

The Wall Street Crash was unique in its scale and in the number of people it ultimately affected. The crash occurred over three calamitous days of trading at the New York Stock Exchange on Wall Street: Thursday 24th, Monday 28th and Tuesday 29th (Black Tuesday) of October 1929, when huge numbers of people decided collectively it was time to sell.

With so many sellers there were, of course, no buyers, and share prices plummeted. Various attempts by bankers

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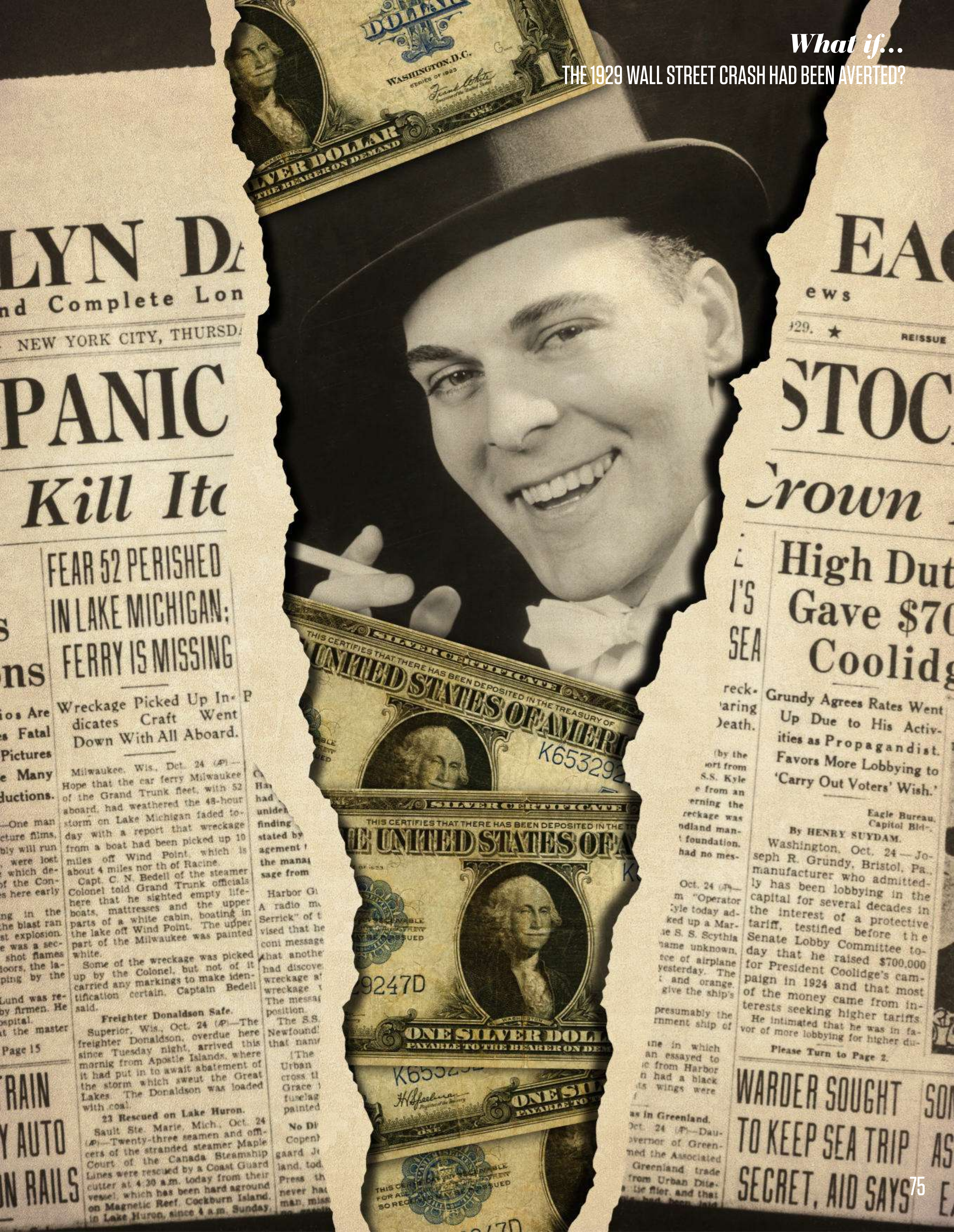
RIGHT
Roaring 20's America was a place of boom that led to bust

Main image source: © Alamy, © Getty Images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PANIC
Kill It

FEAR 52 PERISHED IN LAKE MICHIGAN; FERRY IS MISSING

Wreckage Picked Up Indicates Craft Went Down With All Aboard.

Milwaukee, Wis., Oct. 24 (AP)—Hope that the car ferry Milwaukee of the Grand Trunk fleet, with 52 aboard, had weathered the 48-hour storm on Lake Michigan faded today with a report that wreckage from a boat had been picked up 10 miles off Wind Point, which is about 4 miles nor th of Racine.

Capt. C. N. Bedell of the steamer Colonel told Grand Trunk officials here that he sighted empty lifeboats, mattresses and the upper parts of a white cabin, boating in the lake off Wind Point. The upper part of the Milwaukee was painted white.

Some of the wreckage was picked up by the Colonel, but not of it carried any markings to make identification certain, Captain Bedell said.

Freighter Donaldson Safe.

Superior, Wis., Oct. 24 (AP)—The freighter Donaldson, overdue here since Tuesday night, arrived this mornig from Apostle Islands, where it had put in to await abatement of the storm which sweut the Great Lakes. The Donaldson was loaded with coal.

23 Rescued on Lake Huron.

Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., Oct. 24 (AP)—Twenty-three seamen and officers of the stranded steamer Maple Court of the Canada Steamship Lines were rescued by a Coast Guard cutter at 4:30 a.m. today from their vessel, which has been hard aground on Magnetic Reef, Cockburn Island, in Lake Huron, since 4 a.m. Sunday.

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Grundy Agrees Rates Went Up Due to His Activities as Propagandist. Favors More Lobbying to 'Carry Out Voters' Wish.'

Eagle Bureau,
Capitol Bld-.

By HENRY SUYDAM.

Washington, Oct. 24—Joseph R. Grundy, Bristol, Pa., manufacturer who admittedly has been lobbying in the capital for several decades in the interest of a protective tariff, testified before the Senate Lobby Committee today that he raised $700,000 for President Coolidge's campaign in 1924 and that most of the money came from interests seeking higher tariffs.

He intimated that he was in favor of more lobbying for higher du-

Please Turn to Page 2.

WARDER SOUGHT TO KEEP SEA TRIP SECRET, AID SAYS

THE PAST

25 MARCH 1929

WARNING SIGNS

Following concerns by the US Federal Reserve about a frenzy of speculation and market trading, trading hit a bump in the road as investors sold off stock in rapid succession, causing a minor crash. For a time, productivity slowed across a number of sectors. There had been a good harvest of wheat leading to a glut in the market, pushing prices down. Credit for the ordinary American had become easy to come by and individual debt was on the rise. In spite of this, signs were ignored, the market recovered and sleepwalked towards a fateful end.

24-28 OCTOBER 1929

BLACK DAYS

In September 1929 British investor Charles Hatry was jailed for fraud and his companies suspended, reducing confidence in the markets and perhaps assisting the crash. On 24 October (Black Thursday) 11 percent had been wiped off the price of stock almost immediately. Ticker tape communications were overwhelmed and too slow, leaving investors in the dark about prices. A rescue package by major bankers was hastily put together, buying stock at inflated prices in order to try and stem the flow. It seemed to have worked, but by the 28th (Black Monday) more and more investors were pulling out, and the exodus of investment and decline in the markets continued.

29 OCTOBER 1929

BLACK TUESDAY AND BEYOND

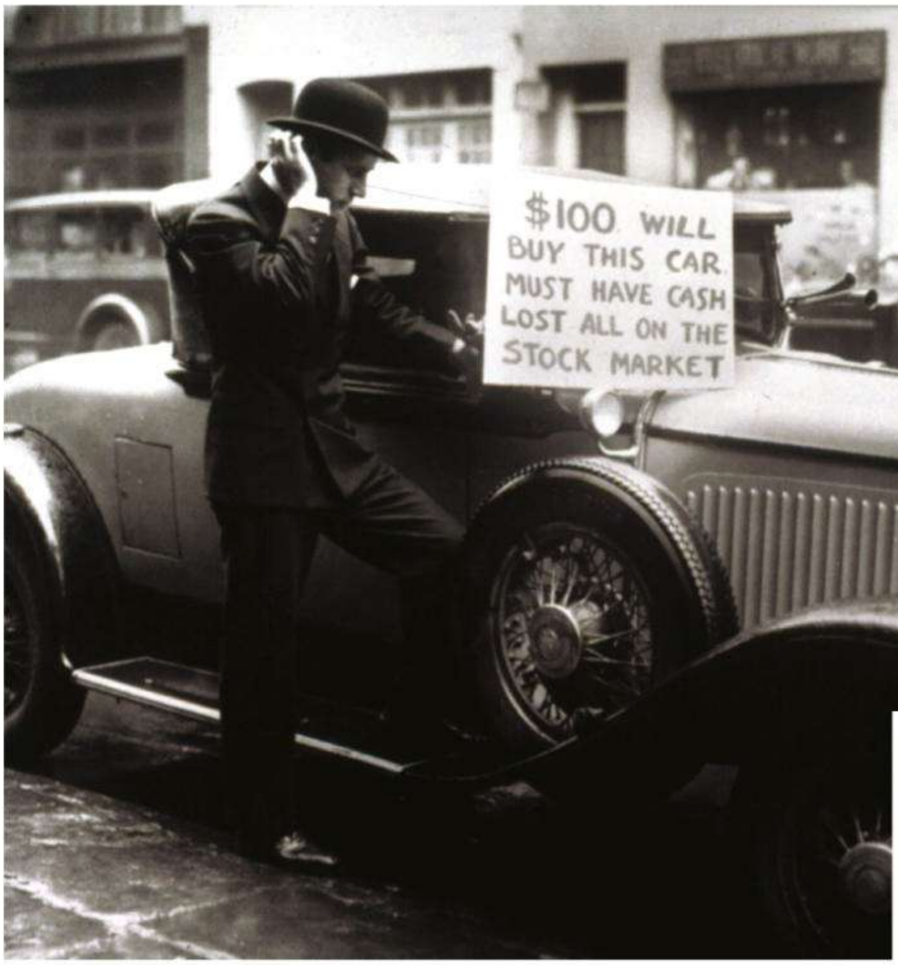
This was the day that billions of dollars was wiped off the value of shares, with an estimated 16 million shares being traded in a single day. To add insult to injury, the following day saw many shares with no buyers at any price. The Dow Jones Index fell over 23 percent in just these two days. Following some minor recovery, the market continued to fall. By 1932 the Dow Jones Index had declined by 89 percent. It would 1954 before the market would once again recover to achieve the highs of 1929.

The Milwaukee Leader

HOME EDITION

BILLIONS LOST IN NEW STOCK CRASH

May Punish Senator for Aiding Tariff Lobbyists



and business leaders to rally the market by buying shares failed. On Black Tuesday alone over $14 billion was wiped off the value of the stock market - more money than the US had spent on WWI. And this was just the beginning. What made the Wall Street Crash worse than any other, before or since, was the way the market kept falling, week after week, month after month. By 1932, stocks had lost nearly 90 percent of their pre-crash value.

Up to three million Americans were directly affected by the crash. Many were bankrupted, including the founder of General Motors, William Crapo Durant. Some took their own lives. An economic recession was certainly going to occur in 1930, with or without the crash, but the crash made it so much worse. With so many people having lost their savings, the consumer boom ended and the USA slid into a depression that would last a decade.

Were there any 'winners' in the crash and if so, how?

There were very few winners from the crash, either reputationally or financially. Respected opinion in the autumn of 1929 was of the view that the economy was sound and prices would keep rising. Irving Fisher, professor of Economics at Yale University, declared on 15 October: "Stock prices have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau." One lone voice of warning came from economist Roger Babson, who in September predicted: "Sooner or later a crash is coming." But he was mostly ignored.

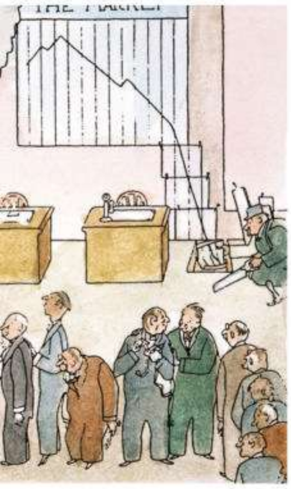
Some canny investors made money out of the crash, including Jesse Lauriston Livermore, Albert H Wiggin and Irving Kahn. They did this by short-selling (borrowing shares of a stock, then selling them with the aim of buying them back cheaper later). Others, like Bernard Baruch, sold their stock before the crash. The winners generally kept very quiet as they saw the economic pain of the crash unfolding around the country, and later around the world.

What were the effects of the crash on the world?

The ripples caused by the Wall Street Crash were felt all around the world. During the boom years of the 1920s, American banks loaned vast amounts of money to European countries to help stimulate their economies after

LINE FORMS
ON THE
RIGHT

LEFT
The financial collapse meant many investors lost everything



BELOW
A contemporary cartoon injected black humour into the disaster

BOTTOM
The crash would herald the Great Depression and immense hardship

the devastation of World War I. When American businesses began to fail after the crash, the United States was forced to call in these loans. This had disastrous consequences for European economies. To make matters worse, the USA raised import taxes to help its own industries by making goods from abroad more expensive. European governments retaliated with similar measures. The result was a drop in world trade and huge rises in unemployment.

Germany was the worst hit. It had relied on American loans to rebuild its economy after the First World War and to pay reparations to the victorious nations. As the depression hit, industrial production in Germany fell by almost half. By 1933, more than six million Germans – over a third of the workforce – were unemployed. The economic crisis led to social and political unrest and the rise of extremist movements. Communists predicted the end of capitalism. Fascists tried to channel people's anger into an aggressive nationalism, blaming 'foreigners' such as Jews for the economic woes. By 1932, Germany's Nazi Party had over a million members, and they were able to use the misery of mass unemployment to win support in general elections. In January 1933, they took power in Germany. The consequences for the world would be devastating.

What did the US and the world learn from the crash?
The administration of Franklin D Roosevelt introduced some important reforms. 'Market rigging' – the manipulation of share prices for personal profit – was outlawed. Reforms were made to the banking system, which had been weakened by the 1929 crash. A law was passed to safeguard those with small savings against losing all their money if the banks closed. This ensured banks did not speculate in their own stock, as they had done irresponsibly in 1929. In 1934, the Securities and Exchange Commission was established to police the stock market.

The crash put an end to the fashion for share trading. For nearly 30 years, nearly all but the wealthiest Americans stopped speculating on the stock market. But as the years went by, memories faded. New generations, unscarred by the crash, began to come into the market. There were further big crashes in 1987 and 2008, but this time the authorities acted decisively to lend cash where needed, buy up stocks and ring-fence banks to protect depositors, preventing a depression.

What would the US have looked like socially, economically and politically if the crash had been averted?
There would have been no banking crisis, no large-scale bankruptcies and business closures. The world was certainly heading for an economic downturn in any case, but it would have been far milder. Herbert Hoover would probably have won a second term as president. The New Deal reforms of Roosevelt would not have been enacted, including the great public works projects of the 1930s and the beginnings of a welfare state. In other words, the USA would have continued with the same small-state, conservative, laissez-faire policies of the 1920s. The country would have been a lot wealthier as a whole, but the gap between rich and poor would have been a great deal wider.

It's conceivable that WWII wouldn't have happened, with all its social impacts – for example, women and African Americans entering the workplace in big numbers and the huge rise in Mexican immigration to make up the shortfall of farmers. Without these developments, it's possible that the dramatic social changes of the 1960s, like the civil rights movement, women's liberation and the War on Poverty, would not have happened, or happened differently. The biggest legacy of the crash is probably the idea that the government should play an active role in addressing people's economic and social problems.

THE POSSIBILITY

1929 ONWARDS

SAME OLD COUNTRY

Without the Wall Street Crash, or one of lesser magnitude, there may not have been a wake-up call for America and the rest of the world. President Herbert Hoover would have been free to continue to pursue his policies of non-intervention by government, leaving the free market to develop, but at the expense of the less well off. Social reform would have been reduced to a snail's pace, especially if he had achieved a second term, with such blinkered thinking being so embedded that protection of ordinary Americans, many of whom had suffered in the crash, would be set back decades.

1933

NO NAZI FOOTHOLD

Surviving on loans from America to rebuild after WWI, the crash was a disastrous economic tidal wave for Germany. The financial rug was well and truly pulled from beneath them. Economic and social chaos ensued, inflation spiralled out of control, and many Germans looked for something, or someone, to save them. Without such turmoil and confusion brought about by the crash, and continued stability to the national debt, it is possible that there would be no opportunity for the Nazis to exploit, no social despair and no route to power. With no Nazi Germany world history would look very different.

1940s ONWARDS

IN A WORLD OF ITS OWN

With possible uninterrupted financial growth by the USA, Europe was still in decline as a major world player. With the possibility that there was no war in Europe from 1939-45, there would be no drain on the US economy. The Soviet Union, without the nationalistic focus of war and defence of its homeland, may well have isolated itself more in its own ideology. The growth of competition with the USA may well have been muted, unable to keep pace with American wealth to develop new technologies and scientific breakthroughs in weapons, and eventually space. Only one superpower would dominate the world, financially and militarily.

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What if...

THE RAF LOST THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN?

The possible consequences of Britain's aerial defeat in 1940 have fascinated historians and perplexed military strategists for decades

INTERVIEW WITH

Image source: Andy Saunders

Andy Saunders

Andy is an author and researcher who specialises in the air war over Europe 1939-45, with a particular interest in the Battle of Britain. He was a founder and the first curator of Tangmere Military Aviation Museum and is a regular TV and film consultant. He currently edits the German military history magazine, *Iron Cross*.

The Battle of Britain was a critical moment in World War II, a tussle that saw the Royal Air Force and other British services stop the German Luftwaffe gaining air superiority over the UK. Since the end of the war many historians have speculated and debated the possible outcomes if the RAF had been defeated in 1940. This usually centres on the idea that a defeat would have been followed by the Nazi invasion of Britain. Operation Sea Lion, as the German invasion plan was called, could have ultimately led to the complete and irremediable defeat of Britain and her vast empire.

However, while the defeat of the RAF might not necessarily have led to invasion (and if it had, such an invasion attempt might well have failed) it would have certainly set in motion a very different series of events for the remainder of the war.

Why was the Battle of Britain such a critical moment for Britain and Nazi Germany?

By the early summer of 1940 Germany had defeated and occupied the majority of Western Europe, while Britain had suffered the ignominious military disaster of defeat in France, Belgium and Norway. Nevertheless, Britain, its empire and the free Allies still stood between Germany and the complete control and domination it desired. To achieve that goal, Germany needed to eliminate Britain as an effective fighting power. Whether it did that through military invasion, or subjugation by other means, was almost an irrelevance. What mattered, if it was to achieve any such aim, was to gain total air superiority. In other words, to defeat the RAF - and, specifically, RAF Fighter Command.

While it might be stretching a point to say that only the RAF stood between invasion and defeat, it was nevertheless a fact that the elimination of the RAF as an effective fighting force was essential if Germany wanted to beat Britain - whether that be by achieving the air superiority necessary for invasion or through bombing Britain into submission through uncontested air attacks.

What was the main reason the RAF was able to stop the Nazis gaining air superiority in 1940?

The most crucial element was the RAF's integrated command and control system. Known colloquially as 'The Dowding System' (after the commander-in-chief of RAF Fighter Command) it incorporated an early warning system through radar and the Observer Corps, allowing commanders to marshal their fighters in a timely fashion and appropriate numbers, and by placing them in the most advantageous tactical position: up-sun, at a higher altitude and aiming to cut off the enemy's approach to target. It did not always work perfectly, but it did allow the RAF's controllers to manage the battle and it thus gave the defenders a great advantage.

What might the Luftwaffe have done differently in the summer of 1940 to defeat the RAF?

Had the Luftwaffe stuck rigidly to its

© Getty Images

RIGHT
Photograph taken from within a German bomber showing a Spitfire hit by enemy fire

Main image sources: © Getty Images

THE PAST

1940

RAF VICTORY

By the autumn of 1940 the Luftwaffe campaign against the RAF was beginning to weaken. On 17 September Hitler suspended Operation Sea Lion – the planned invasion of the UK – and 31 October saw the final daylight raid by the Luftwaffe. Although seriously weakened, the RAF had successfully stopped the Germans gaining air superiority over Britain.

© Alamy

1940-41

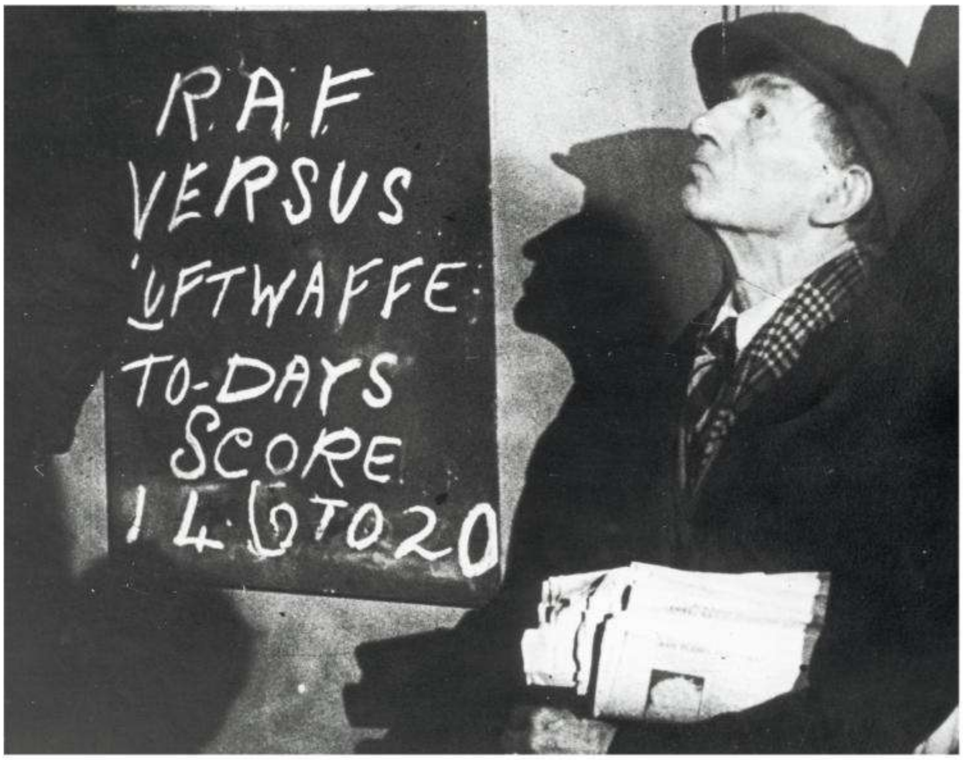
THE BLITZ

After it was realised the Luftwaffe had failed to gain air superiority over the UK, the Nazis switched to a focus on nighttime bombing raids. Known simply as the Blitz, for several months German bombers targeted major cities and industrial centres, but also the civilian population. Despite the widespread devastation and loss of life, the British morale remained strong, and the 'Blitz Spirit' of defiant endurance was used in propaganda efforts to maintain support for the war effort.

1942

"REAP THE WHIRLWIND"

Continuing its offensive operations begun during the Battle of Britain, the RAF expanded greatly in the aftermath of 1940 and developed more-effective tactics and technologies to take the fight back to Nazi Germany. In 1942 Arthur 'Bomber' Harris was made Air Marshal of Bomber Command, and began a campaign of strategic area bombing against Germany, stating: "They sowed the wind, and now they are going to reap the whirlwind." One of the first major bombing operations was on the night of 30 May, during which over 1,000 RAF aircraft bombed the city of Cologne, destroying approximately 13,000 buildings.



ABOVE A newspaper seller next to a board with the latest 'score' of the Battle of Britain

attacks on RAF airfields (particularly fighter bases), and to infrastructure such as the radar stations, then it would have had a much better chance of bringing Fighter Command to its knees. When it moved away from those targets in late August it did so just at a point when the raids were starting to tell. A relentless continuation and focus on those targets would have finally borne fruit.

Shifting the bombing to cities, industrial targets and ports etc, including night bombing raids, was a grave tactical error by the Nazis because the Luftwaffe really needed to knock out the RAF's defensive capability.

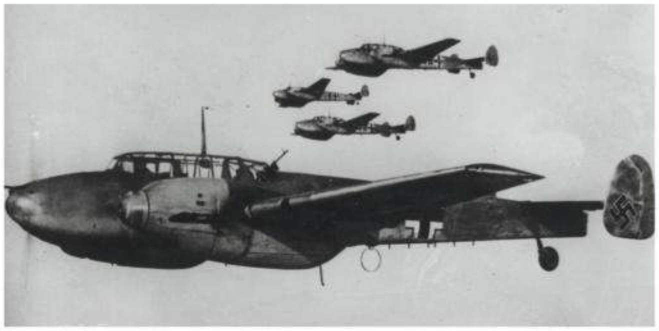
BELOW London's St Paul's Cathedral seen through the smoke after a night of Luftwaffe bombing

If the Luftwaffe had won, would daytime bombing have increased? And what capacity did the Germans have to increase bombing raids?

If the Luftwaffe had been victorious in defeating RAF Fighter Command, then it would have been able to increase daylight bombing operations and range across Britain at will and relatively unhindered, and it would have had capacity to do so. Daylight bombing was far more accurate than bombing by night – as in the Blitz. It would have enabled concentrated targeting to bring about the destruction of infrastructure, warehousing, docks, communications, manufacturing, remaining military targets, food supplies and more. In this manner, Germany might have theoretically secured the defeat of Britain and its neutralisation as a fighting power without any need for a risky cross-Channel invasion.

What impact might an increase in bombing have had on Britain's war effort and morale?

An increase in bombing (in the event of RAF Fighter Command defeat) might have been catastrophic for Britain's continuation with the war if its ability to manufacture or import was sufficiently depleted. However, in such an eventuality as the defeat of the RAF, there would have been no purpose in the Luftwaffe 'terror bombing' the civilian population. The effort would have been militarily and tactically wasted, although public morale



may have begun to buckle if it saw or realised that its erstwhile saviours, the RAF, had already been defeated.

That said, the Ministry of Information's Home Security Unit monitored morale in the Blitz, and while the reaction of civilians was variable it was over-arched by grumbles and grievances rather than any doom-laden crumbling of morale. One of the leaders of the organisation monitoring morale wrote: "The British are pragmatic and with a stability of temperament, albeit with a slightly gloomy tinge."

He went on to say that they tended towards self-righteous indignation when things went wrong and had a masochistic delight in, "knowing the worst." He also judged that to the British, "the possibility of defeat is neither imagined, nor imaginable." This, of course, was when Dunkirk had been perceived as 'victorious', the Battle of Britain had been won and the population buoyed-up by the rhetoric of Winston Churchill. All of that may have changed if the British population was truly staring defeat in the face.

ABOVE-TOP A British soldier guarding a German Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighter plane, which had been intercepted over the English Channel and shot down

ABOVE-MIDDLE Hawker Hurricanes in formation during 1940

ABOVE Messerschmitt Bf110 bombers in formation flight

If the RAF had been defeated, was a German invasion or a British surrender more likely?

Even with air superiority wrested from the RAF, it was not a given that invasion would have followed because such an operation was fraught with danger and difficulty – even with Fighter Command out of the way. Part of the problem for Germany was the logistical issue of getting an invasion force across the Channel because it simply did not have either the right vessels or sufficient numbers of them.

Additionally, the Luftwaffe had lost a huge percentage of its Ju 52 transport fleet in Holland and many key naval vessels in Norway, and with the Royal Navy still immensely powerful its Home Fleet would have impeded invasion attempts. However, the Royal Navy's ships would have been very vulnerable to Luftwaffe attack (particularly from the Ju 87 Stuka) without fighter cover from the RAF. Also, and again without fighter cover, Bomber Command would have intervened.

The occupying force would also need to be fed and supplied, and supply lines may have been challenging.

Was it possible the RAF could have been rebuilt to defend Britain?

Had RAF Fighter Command been defeated, and no invasion or occupation of Britain had subsequently occurred, then it might theoretically have been possible to rebuild the fighter force. However, this would have been contingent upon the ability to continue aircraft production in undamaged factories (there was never a shortage of aircraft, only of pilots) or potentially the import of suitable American fighters – although this would all have taken time.

The rebuilding of RAF capability within Britain would also have been reliant upon the supply of raw materials, that the Luftwaffe did not then focus on the destruction of aircraft factories, and that enough pilots could be trained and made operational in good time.

THE POSSIBILITY

1940

LUFTWAFFE SUPERIORITY

With RAF Fighter Command crippled or destroyed, the Luftwaffe would have reigned supreme in British airspace. With no fighter aircraft to pose any threat, Luftwaffe bombers could launch a greater number of bombing raids on Britain's industrial centres and major cities. The benefit of bombing during the daytime would have made these raids far more accurate and therefore devastating for Britain's war industry.

1941

BLITZ SPIRIT BROKEN

In a speech to Parliament after the evacuation of Dunkirk, Winston Churchill was able to rally the morale of the public by drawing great confidence from the RAF's successes against the Luftwaffe. The defeat of the RAF during the summer of 1940 would therefore have come as a shock to many, and certainly a dark moment during a war that so far had seen few if any significant victories for the Allies. The unrestricted bombing of British factories and cities would have had a further impact on public morale, as well as Britain's war industry. Though an invasion of the mainland UK may still not have taken place, Britain's factories and port towns would have been heavily damaged during the bombings, greatly reducing Britain's ability to continue the war.

All images: © Getty Images

What if...

ENGLAND AND SPAIN HAD UNIFIED?

Despite political rivalry and religious differences, a union of the two ambitious nations could have changed world history for centuries

INTERVIEW WITH

© Lorentz Gullachsen

Dr Tracy Borman

Dr Borman is an historian, author, broadcaster and joint chief curator of Historic Royal Palaces. Her latest book is *Crown & Sceptre: A New History of the British Monarchy* (Hodder, 2021)

With one a dynasty in its infancy and the other a rising star born out of the Holy Roman Empire, any possible union of England and Spain in the 16th century would have been a very winding and bumpy road. Whether through a peaceful marriage alliance or military invasion and suppression, what potentially could've emerged would have been a superpower on a global scale never before seen, propelling Spain and England into an almost invincible position. But accord, compromise and trust would have been vital for any formal union to survive the turbulence of the 16th century.

Would unification have been forged with force or diplomacy? Would it have been possible before Mary I and Philip of Spain?

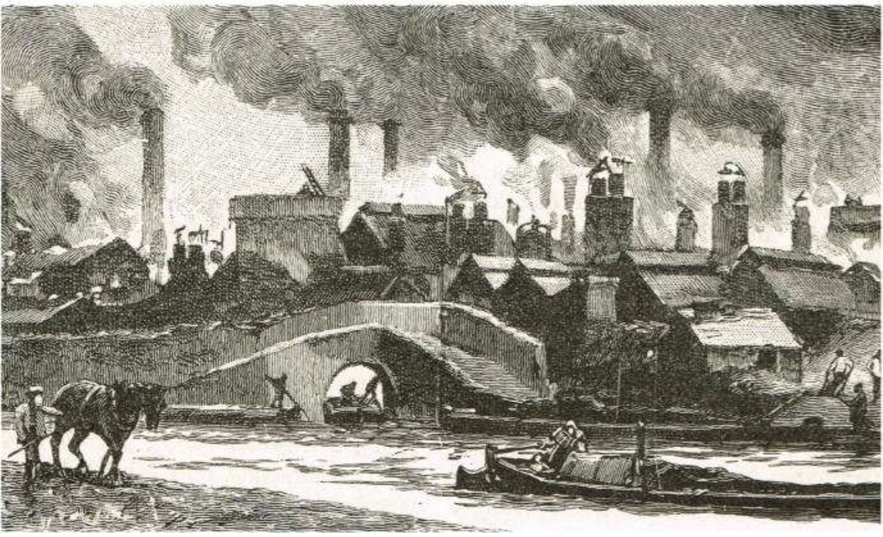
Mary I was not the first Tudor to champion the idea of a union between England and Spain. This had begun with the marriage of her mother, Catherine of Aragon, to Henry VII's eldest son and heir, Arthur, in 1501. The wedding guests were treated to a host of allegorical pageants celebrating the union of the English and Spanish crowns. But when Catherine became queen to Arthur's surviving brother Henry, all the hope, early years of happiness and popularity dissolved into bitterness, isolation and, eventually, the famous annulment of their marriage. Henry fought so hard for that annulment in order to marry Anne Boleyn and in turn rock the very foundations of the Roman Catholic Church. The very thought of unification or alliance with Spain faded into fantasy, at least for a while.

But while the alliance with Spain was certainly beneficial to the fledgling Tudor dynasty, there was never any suggestion of a full union until Mary's marriage to Philip of Spain in 1554. Even then, she failed to persuade parliament to recognise her husband as joint sovereign; they insisted that she be the "sole queen" and that Philip's authority would be strictly prescribed. Their views chimed with those of Mary's subjects. "The English… are most hostile by their nature to foreigners," remarked one ambassador. Stark proof of this came with a popular uprising early in 1554, led by Sir Thomas Wyatt, which aimed "to prevent us from over-running by strangers." So despite the perception we may have of monarchs of this time pleasing themselves (with Henry VIII the prime example!), the overriding power of the people was to prevail. This would be a marker that, should any serious alliance or union be further proposed, opposition, unrest and even rebellion could've been the response from the people of England.

Could it have been an equal alliance? What would each country gain?

England was dwarfed by the might of Spain so there was little prospect of equality. Philip's father, Charles V, had inherited a vast empire that encompassed Germany, Austria, Burgundy, the Netherlands and parts of Italy. Although Philip did not succeed his father as Holy Roman Emperor, he nevertheless inherited a sprawling territory and numerous titles, which made him one of the most powerful rulers in the world. His closest rival was not England, but France.

Arguably, therefore, England had more to gain from an alliance. Having lost most of its French territories it could even be seen as some form of compensation for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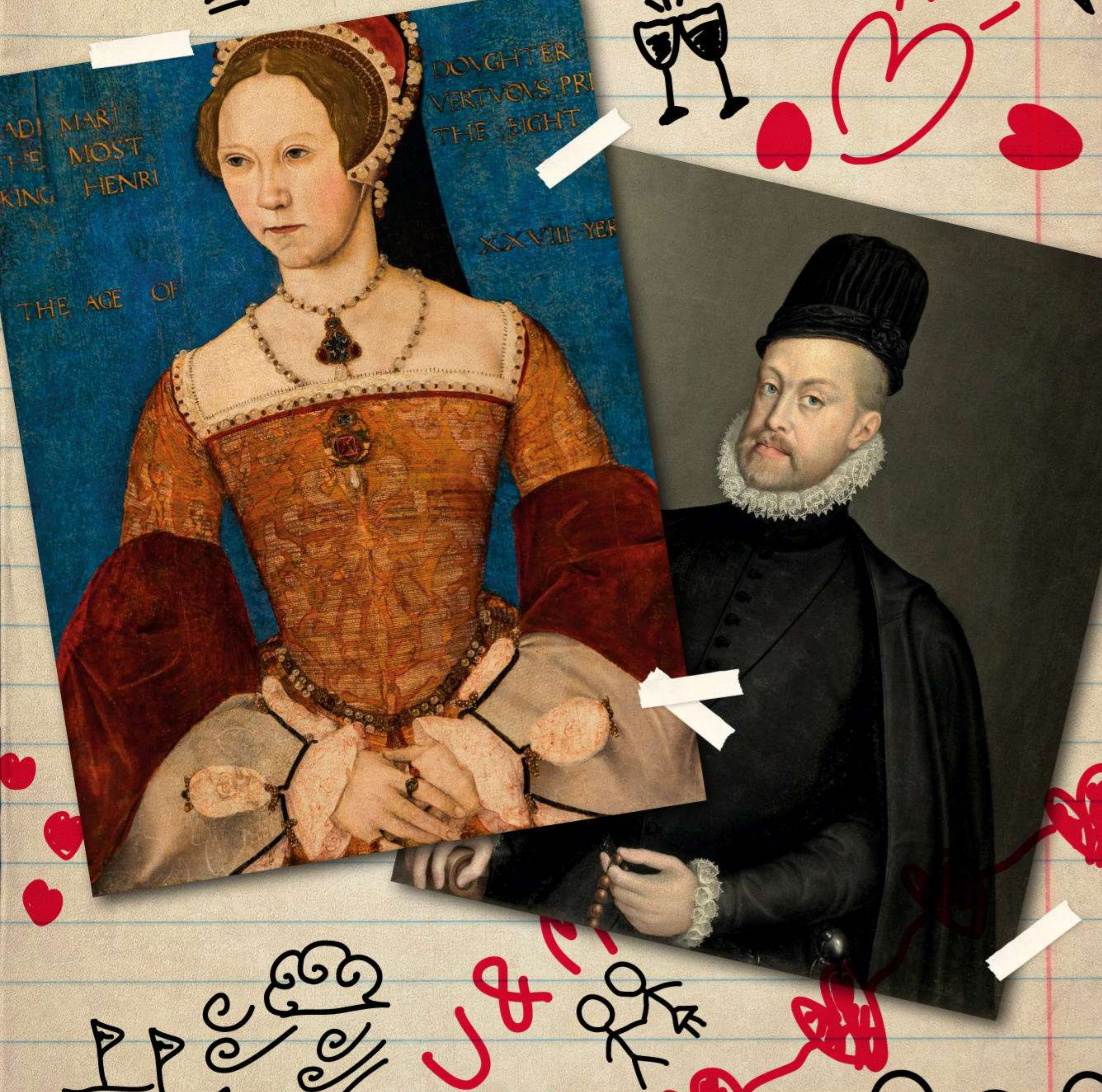
RIGHT
England's industrial future would have been stifled by Spain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THE PAST

1509-33

NOT A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN

If the marriage of Catherine of Aragon to Arthur, heir to the English throne, was Plan A, with Arthur's death in 1502 there had to be a Plan B to save the marriage alliance, and that was Henry. But for Henry, their daughter Mary was not enough, and this was to be Catherine's downfall. She was the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, but with no son and heir, and his attentions towards Anne Boleyn bordering on the obsessive, Henry set about dismantling his marriage. For him, alliance with Spain was no longer important.

1553-58

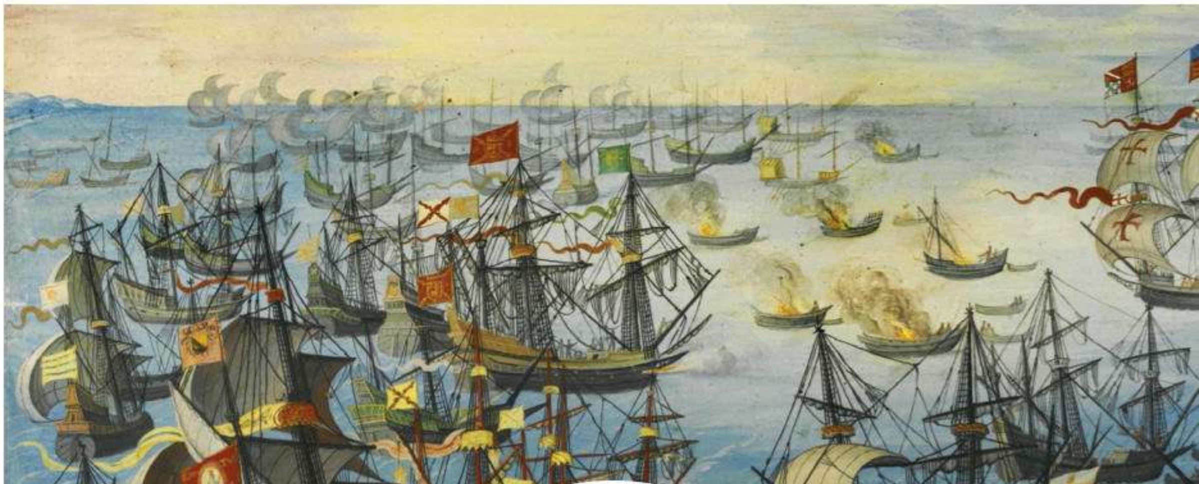
RELIGION & RESISTANCE

Following the strictly Protestant reign of her young brother Edward VI, Mary Tudor was determined to reinstate the 'true' religion and beliefs of Roman Catholicism. Mary had Spanish blood running through her veins, and a further, closer, alliance with Spain was increasingly possible with Mary's marriage to the Spanish king, Philip II. But that was still not enough for a cast-iron union with Spain. There was resistance at every turn to allow Phillip to be even joint monarch, and a brief armed uprising plainly demonstrated the resistance of the people.

1558-1603

FROM ALLY TO ENEMY

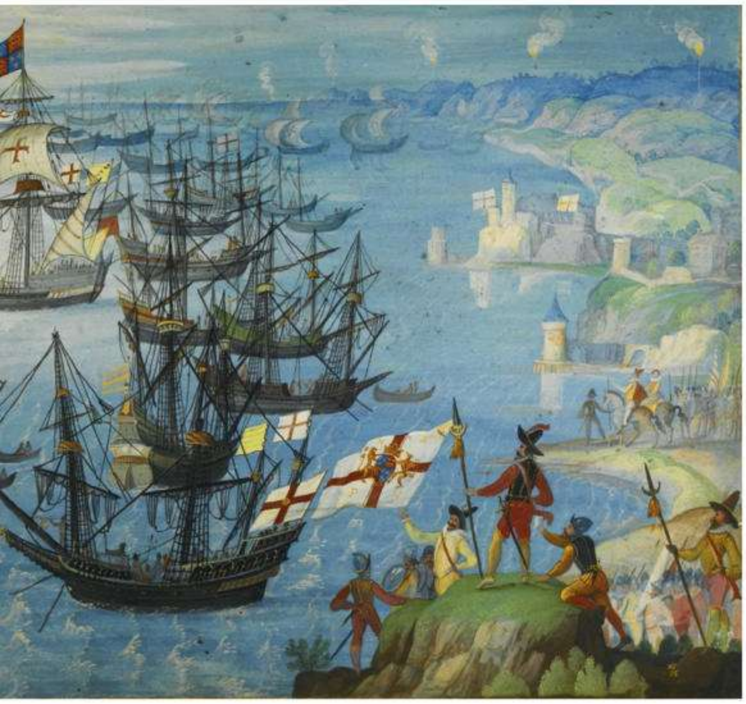
Like her father Henry VIII, Elizabeth I played political chess with her European neighbours, allying with Spain or France in turn to suit her political needs and ambitions. Philip of Spain supported her ascension to the English throne, and a year after his wife Mary died and Elizabeth became queen he proposed to her, only to be rejected. But from being on the brink of an alliance, Elizabeth's support for the rebels in the Spanish Netherlands and the plundering of Spanish riches from South America by English sea-faring 'adventurers' forced Spain's hand and the Armada was launched.



such a fall in influence and power in Europe, regaining some respect and prestige even at such a high price as alliance with Spain would be. But England also risked becoming a satellite of Spain, its resources channelled into expensive military campaigns on behalf of Spanish, not English, interests. As an island, it had long enjoyed independence from continental Europe (including a separate church, thanks to Henry VIII), but this would've come to an abrupt – and bloody – end if the two kingdoms had united.

What would have been the implications for religion for both sides? Would it have been persecution or compromise? And what unrest could've been expected?
With Spain as the dominant partner, England would have in theory returned to the Roman Catholic fold, with the Church of England abolished and the pope holding sway once more. But even the staunchly Roman Catholic Mary I had failed to achieve that, despite burning hundreds of 'heretics' and enlisting the help of Catholic powerhouses such as Cardinal Reginald Pole. What she failed to appreciate was just how deeply embedded her father's Reformation had become. At least half of the population was Protestant, and even many Catholics were against the idea of re-joining the Roman Catholic Church – especially those who had profited from the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

Elizabeth I herself was a Protestant and had refused to convert to Catholicism during Mary's reign, even under threat of



ABOVE
A joint English and Spanish navy would dominate the world

LEFT-INSET
Elizabeth's succession would have jeopardised a union forged by Mary I

LEFT
Gold from the New World would finance the new empire

execution, so it is unlikely that she and Philip would have reached a compromise. By the middle of the following century, the strength of feeling against Catholicism led to civil war in England. Suffice it to say, religion would have been the thorniest of all the issues to be resolved in a union between the two countries.

What impact would it have had on the balance of military and political power in Europe? Which states stood to lose the most from such an alliance? (And what about Scotland!?)
Throughout the Tudor period, power in Europe had been finely balanced between France and Spain, with England allying with one or the other according to the shifting circumstances. A permanent union with Spain would have seriously disrupted this. The complex web of European diplomacy is unlikely to have been enough to hold back open aggression. With so much territory already controlled by Spain, the addition of England to the fold would have been potentially overwhelming and the ensuing conflicts would've changed the political, social and geographical landscape of Europe forever.

Scotland united with England upon the death of Elizabeth I in 1603, when James VI of Scotland was her closest blood relative. But if England had united with Spain during Elizabeth's reign, that union might not have happened at all – at least not willingly on Scotland's part. Scotland had always cherished its independence from England and the Scots would have likely been even more averse to a Spanish alliance because of the so-called 'auld alliance' between Scotland and France. With France as Spain's enemy number one this may in itself have drawn Scotland into a much wider European conflict anyway and open a battle line on England's northern border. Then there was the issue of religion: Protestantism was even more firmly established in Scotland than in England, so if Spain had wanted to bring Scotland into the union with England it would have had to do so by force.

What kind of global force would have been created in territory, trade and influence and what impact would that have had on future history?
It would have been something approaching a superpower. England was a small country but it was a rich one, so it could have financed Spanish aggression, enabling this newly formed empire to acquire even more territories. England and Spain were already the most powerful forces in trade, so if they had united they would have dominated nearly every trade route across the globe. The repercussions of this would have reached far into the future – but not necessarily to England's glory. By the 19th century England – or rather Britain – led the world in trade and industry and had a vast empire. If it had united with Spain then it might have enjoyed joint influence earlier, but with Spain as the dominant partner its own influence through language and culture – and identity – would have been suffocated.

What trade-offs/compromises would have been needed to make it work?
The number-one compromise would've been religion. It lay at the heart of everything: war, politics, finance and, ultimately, power. Elizabeth I proved how important it was to achieve compromise in religion, but as soon as her reign ended and there was no longer such a skilful leader on the throne, it rose to the fore again – with disastrous results. With such divergent views between England and Spain it's hard to see how such a compromise could've been achieved. It was hard enough achieving it within England itself!

If England and Spain had united during Elizabeth's reign, each would have needed to retain a separate monarch. Such an arrangement would have required a huge level of trust on both sides, something that was in short supply among monarchs in the 16th century. But upon her death without direct heirs, Philip could have claimed the English throne fully for himself and his descendants, leaving a Spanish Empire with the entire world at its feet.

THE POSSIBILITY

1553 – PRESENT

WAR WAR, NOT JAW JAW

Any formal alliance between Spain and England would have had deep political and religious repercussions throughout Europe. Any balance of power involving France would have been seriously undermined. The imposition of strict Catholic beliefs by Spain as the dominant partner in the alliance with England would have caused constant unrest. Persecution and oppression would be the order of the day, with any resistance met with the full force of the new empire's financial, political and military power. Europe would've become a battleground as new alliances were made and old ones broken.

1553 – PRESENT

TAKING A DIFFERENT LINE

In the 16th century even royal marriages were no guarantee of a strong line of succession. But what if things had been different? If Mary and Philip had had children, and in particular a male heir, then there would have been no Elizabethan era. If Elizabeth had decided to marry Philip after all and they had children, or Philip decided to introduce his own heirs after her death, then the succession of James VI of Scotland as James I of England would have been in doubt. There would've been no Charles I, and so no English Civil War. The entire course of British and European history would have been different.

1553 – PRESENT

A NEW WORLD ORDER

Had Spain and England unified and pooled their resources, wealth, expansionist ambitions and trade links, there would've emerged a global superpower on a scale never seen before. Both knew the value of trade and the wealth it brought. But as its master the Spanish Empire would always have held its English terrier on a very tight leash. English influence around the world through culture and most notably language would've been stifled and English innovation and invention, along with its pride, would've been robbed by Spain as if gold bullion on the high seas.

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What if...

WOMEN HAD RULED IN ROME?

Would putting power politics and military muscle under a matriarchal royal family have brought stable government or bloody sibling civil war?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Jamie Drew

Dr Emma Southon

Dr Southon is the author of *Marriage, Sex And Death: The Family And The Fall Of The Roman West*; *Agrippina: Empress, Exile, Hustler, Whore*, and *A Fatal Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum*. She also co-hosts the podcast, *History Is Sexy*

Ancient Rome was a world dominated by men, its history defined by rulers such as Caesar, Nero and Augustus. In contrast to this, most women found themselves subservient to the whims of their husbands or fathers, and were rarely - if ever - permitted to hold positions of public office. While there are examples of women who were able to wield power despite these restrictions (Fulvia, Claudia Metrodora and Valeria Messalina, to name just a few), the possibility of a Rome ruled by an empress and not an emperor opens up a world of possibilities. What if it was the wives and daughters of the emperors who held the reins of power?

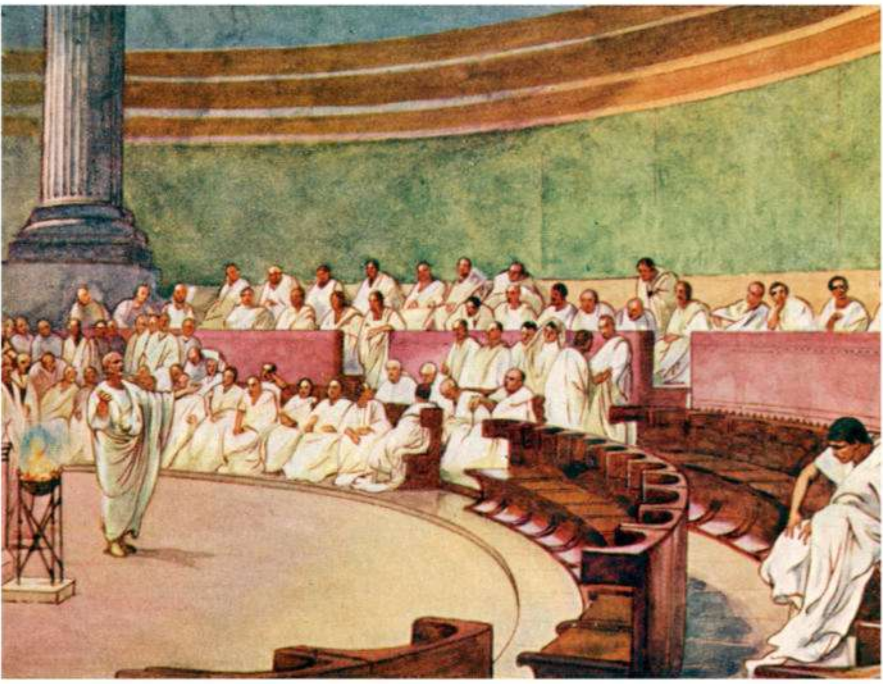
What, if any, influence and power did women already have?

Female power in the Roman world was limited to social power and their ability to influence the men in their lives. The most powerful women we see in Rome are those who are either sui iuris, which means they are free from guardianship and are able to control their own financial interests, such as Livia after the death of Augustus, or those who are able to control their men, like Agrippina the Younger during her marriage to Claudius. But both those things were at the mercy of men, and could be taken away. Livia was still controlled by her son, who refused her certain honours and forbade her from having parties with men, for example. Agrippina lost everything when she became dependent on Nero. Women were always at a disadvantage in Rome.

What changes to politics could there have been under female rule?

With women in politics, issues deemed 'domestic' become much more political. As the family becomes a political space, we begin to see things like Claudius being criticised as a weak man because he cannot 'control' his household. With women in the public mix, even more domestic issues, like childbearing and breastfeeding, become politicised. Like men, women have to marry to attain political office and have children, keeping Rome's elite population up, and any inability to have children is scrutinised and used against them by political opponents. Empresses are under constant scrutiny about their sexual activity and fertility, which is everyone's business because it's the empire's business. There is no longer a private or domestic sphere that can be considered out of the public eye. A lot more politicians would die in childbirth.

Having women as rulers would also have potentially obliterated the fiction that the Roman imperial system wasn't a hereditary monarchy and stabilised Roman politics early on. With women as empresses, giving birth to the next ruler has a definite clarity, and everyone would probably have been a lot happier. Right at the start, Augustus could have left his throne to his only daughter Julia, and she to one of her children. The whole thing becomes a lot less messy and ridiculous,



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RIGHT
The Roman Senate was very much a man's world

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THE PAST

509–27 BCE

SUFFERING IN SILENCE

Women in the Roman world had very little political power, and their economic power was limited by a very patriarchal social structure. Except in exceptional circumstances, women were perpetual minors in the eyes of law; they could own property and accumulate money, but could not dispose of it, sign contracts, appear in court, etc, unless they had the permission and signature of a male guardian who was a father, brother, husband or unrelated guardian appointed for them. This was still a serious limit on how powerful women could be, and the Senate was definitely a male-only preserve.

42 BCE

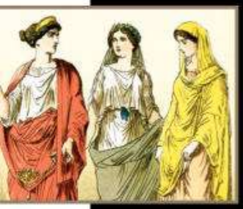
THE EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE

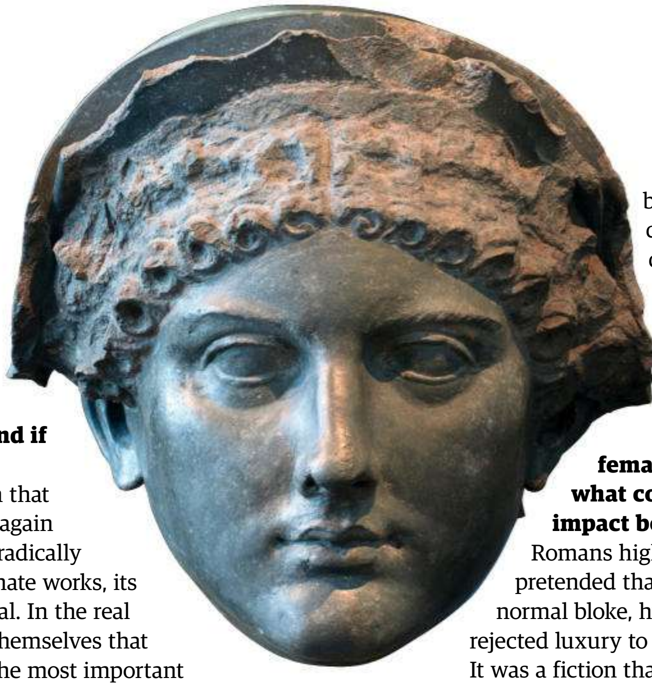
Roman women did sometimes find their voice and shake off the mantle of male dominance, albeit briefly. In 42 BCE, Hortensia gave an impassioned speech in the Forum in defiance of the Triumvirate's plans to tax Rome's richest women in order to fund their military campaigns. Even more significant was the role played by Julia Agrippina (Agrippina the Younger). Through all the twists and turns of political survival, she was sister, wife and mother to successive emperors. She ruled equally in all but name with husband Claudius, then regent to her son, Nero. True power was within her grasp, only for her to be denied this – and her life – by her own son.

284 CE

THE *OTHER* WOMEN

Respectable Roman men needed wives who were chaste, moral and honourable. Even though it was a man's 'right' to indulge in what lower class women, prostitutes and slaves had to offer, wives were not afforded the same freedoms. There was even a dress code for moral status. Respectable women wore a long dress, or stola, a mantle (palla), and ties in their hair (vittae). Prostitutes wore a toga. As clear symbolism, and to embellish the male domination of society, a woman guilty of adultery would often be made to wear a toga.





ABOVE Agrippina the Younger had substantial influence but never real power

and stabilises – at least until some siblings fall out.

Would the structure of Roman society have possibly looked different, and if so, how?

If female rulers mean that Rome is a monarchy again in all but name, this radically reshapes how the Senate works, its purpose and its appeal. In the real world, Romans told themselves that the Senate was still the most important political entity in the empire, and that it was necessary for men to have a political career within the Senate in order to be important. In reality, the emperor was an absolute monarch, the imperial household was the most powerful entity, and the Senators had no particular power unless they got together to do an assassination! This clash of ideas and reality caused a huge amount of strife and an awful lot of assassinations, beginning with Gaius Caligula. If Julia becomes Augusta after her father's death and the 'royal' succession kicks in, then the Senate would lose its prestige and focus relatively quickly as the only place to gain power.

With the rise of an imperial court and the demotion of the Senate to a parliament, Rome would become a more 'normal' monarchy, with all its attendant pros and cons. It might, however, prevent the rise of the imperial freedmen and the equestrians, which happened in the early empire. As the imperial house became a reality, but senators insisted on pretending that it hadn't, positions of real power and influence were filled by enslaved people, formerly enslaved people and equestrians who couldn't do politics. Had the senatorial class of great families instead become members of an imperial court and had positions like head of the empress's private army, head of the household, secretary of her treasury, etc, then the wealth and power of the empire could have remained concentrated among these families.

This also means that there is less political competition among the Roman elite, fewer attempts to buy public support with the building of theatres, baths, fora, basilicas and public spaces, and much more in the way of increasing a family's personal luxury with glorious private spaces like the Golden House, pleasure gardens, private theatres, baths, etc. This would drastically reduce the quality of life of normal people living in Roman towns and cities.

What different qualities would a female ruler have, and what could the potential impact be?

Romans highly praised rulers who pretended that they were just a normal bloke, humble and modest, and rejected luxury to walk with the senators. It was a fiction that the emperor was just another politician like them, even as they sacrificed to him as a god. Female rulers would force this to change. It would not be possible to pretend that an empress just happened to be the best man for the job of leading the senate. Humility and modesty make a monarch vulnerable (and walking with the senators often left them open to a quick stabbing in an alley, or their bedroom), and female rulers would instead lean into the other side of Roman rule, which was majesty.

A lot of 'bad' emperors relied on charges of maiestas (lese-majeste) to bolster a weak rule, allowing people to be prosecuted for everything from putting a statue of themselves on higher ground than a statue of the emperor to asking astrologers when the emperor would die. The tension between the emperor being majestic and humble often caused problems, and female rulers would be forced to abandon the humility part. They could instead lean into magnificent demonstrations of wealth and power – as Caligula and Nero did, for example – and maintain a dignified distance between the monarch and everyone else in order to protect the imperial family and the majesty of the imperial house.

Would Rome have remained an expanding, aggressive, military-based Empire?

Rome with female rulers is still a military empire, with all its pragmatism, but less aggressive. Roman expansion was driven by competition between politicians who were also military leaders. Politicians led invasions and expansionist wars in order to enhance their own wealth and political reputation. With women in politics, we'd probably see a split between political professionals and military professionals, with the military as a separate arm of the state, mostly because women cannot go marching off for long years fighting Gauls or Persians, and also balance having children. But equally, there would be resistance to the idea that military success could overshadow the political careers and achievements of non-military individuals. What we'd see, then, is military achievements being divorced from politics and celebrated as their own thing. With military success no longer guaranteeing political success, the motivation for aggressive expansion for the sake of expansion is reduced, and Rome becomes a less pointlessly expansionist empire.

However, Rome is still a fundamentally militaristic and arrogant culture with a fragile ego, and any attempt to see this less aggressive Rome as a passive Rome would be very much mistaken. Any encroachment on Roman interests or land would be met with the overwhelming force of the Roman army, which would continue smashing things until the threat had been eliminated.

How might a female ruler have guaranteed her succession, and what challenges would they face?

This would probably be the easiest part for the first half. She would need to have kids. Roman culture was strongly family based, and what we would call nepotism was called good parenting and familial duty, so they would happily accept that a parent would give their children their role in life. They also firmly believed that children were enhanced by their parents, so having a royal parent would be enough for them to accept that a royal kid would be a good ruler. Even when they were pretending that they didn't live under a hereditary monarchy, they demanded that emperors offer them a clear successor who was ideally a family member, so they would happily have accepted offspring as successors.

There would have been two main problems. First, childbirth was incredibly dangerous. For every 1,000 babies born in the ancient world, as many as 25 women died (compared to 2/1000 in the modern world). With maternal death comes infant rulers, and the inevitable corrupt regents.

The second problem is that Roman law did not recognise primogeniture. All children inherited equally. So, for example, all six of Julia's children would have an equal claim to the throne, with war between siblings inevitable. An empress would need to either institute primogeniture all the way down, which would be incredibly unpopular (suddenly a lot of kids are inheriting nothing from their parents), or hope that her kids would behave themselves (historically unsuccessful) or divide the empire between the children, as the Frankish Kingdoms did, for example (this went badly for them). Either way, the empire and the succession would be destabilised in a whole new fun way, which involves a lot more civil wars.

BELOW
Roman women were thought to be either honourable or immoral

THE POSSIBILITY

14 CE

THE DIRECT ROUTE

Julia, daughter of Augustus, would have been empress instead of Tiberius, changing the entire Julio-Claudian succession. Augustus would have been able to bestow his rule of Rome upon his only child; and with a completely different bloodline through new rules of direct succession, the character and decisions of those replacing Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius and Nero may well have taken the Roman Empire down a very different road to the one we are so familiar with.

64 CE

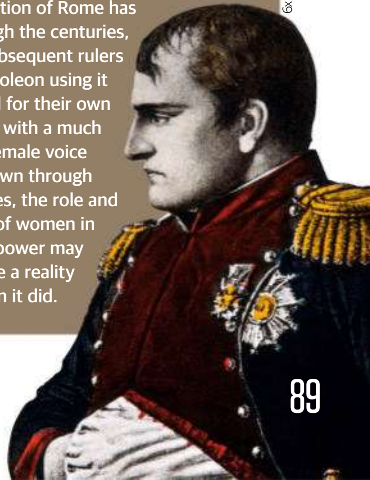
RESTING ON THEIR LAURELS

The emergence of an imperial court reduces competition for status among the Senate, and means that Romans spend their money building luxuries for themselves instead of amenities for the people. We would be left with an almost two dimensional legacy and archaeological record of the Roman Empire, with fewer theatres, baths and temples, and far more Golden Houses. With the introduction of a monarchy-style rule and succession, and the Senate powerless puppets, Rome as a shining example of 'democracy' would be deeply damaged.

395 CE–PRESENT

THE BALANCE OF HISTORY

The ownership of history as a male preserve may have changed. History has traditionally been written and recorded by men about men. But with female Roman rulers as role models, their words, actions and decisions recorded for posterity, this exclusive club may have been overturned. The influence and inspiration of Rome has carried through the centuries, with many subsequent rulers such as Napoleon using it as the model for their own empire. But with a much stronger female voice echoing down through the centuries, the role and perception of women in positions of power may have become a reality sooner than it did.



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What if...

JOAN OF ARC HAD NOT BROKEN THE SIEGE OF ORLEANS?

A teenage girl in armour, with a God-given vision of victory, held the fate of France in her hands

INTERVIEW WITH

© Sharon Connolly

Sharon Bennett Connolly

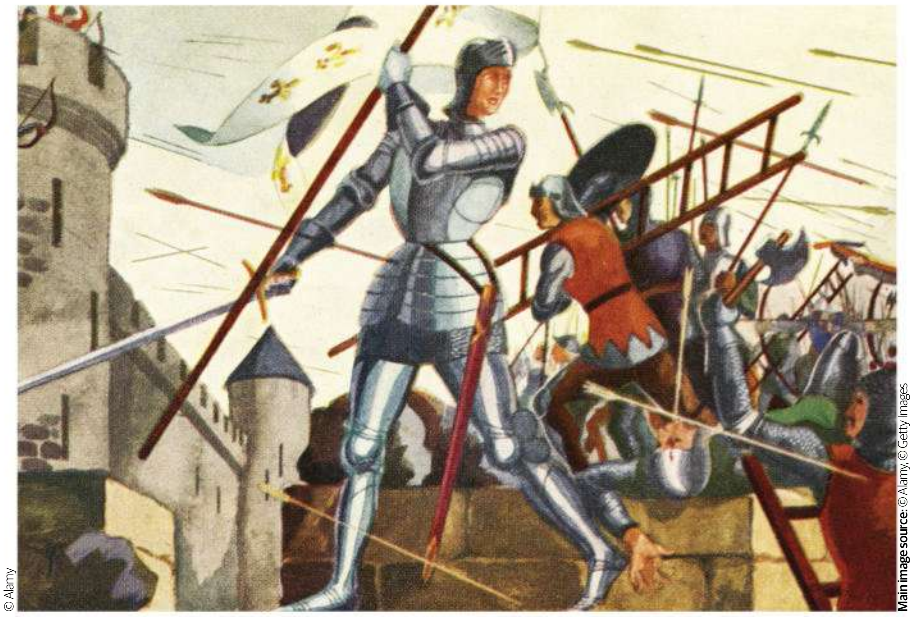
Sharon is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society and best-selling author of *Heroines of the Medieval World*, *Silk and the Sword: The Women of the Norman Conquest*, and *Ladies of Magna Carta: Women of Influence in Thirteenth Century England*. Her fourth book, *Defenders of the Norman Crown: Rise and Fall of the Warenne Earls of Surrey*, was released in May 2021. She also writes the popular history blog, ***www.historytheinterestingbits.com***.

The Hundred Years' War (1337 – 1453) raged on between England and France, with its complex and cutthroat world of royal claim and counterclaim over titles and land. Through all the manoeuvring of armies and political games of princes came a young woman with a message of simple faith and passion for her country. Her words would be an inspiration to all around her, and her courage would give real hope to all who wanted to free France from the grip of the English throne. The Siege of Orleans in 1429 would prove a pivotal moment to believe in, or doubt, Joan of Arc, and for the very future of France itself.

How strategically important was the siege and how may the war have been altered if it had not been broken by Joan of Arc?
Orleans was important for both France and for Joan of Arc. For Joan it was a test to prove that she could deliver on what she had promised. For France, it was the start of the fight back against the English occupation. Another victory at Patay in June 1429 saw the English routed; their reputation for invincibility was destroyed with the French achieving an impressive victory. The road was open for Joan's troops to advance on Paris and preparations could be made for the dauphin's coronation at Reims. It all started with Orleans.

A city that had been besieged for six months was freed in four days. Joan's lightning success established her credentials and her reputation. Had she failed at Orleans her career would have been short-lived indeed, and she may well have paid with her life. Having persuaded the dauphin to have faith in her, her failure would've been an embarrassment to him and he could have easily ordered her execution.

What unique qualities did Joan have, or what exceptional circumstances prevailed, which meant she could succeed where others had failed?
Joan had an inherent belief in her destiny and duty. In her early teens she began to experience visions and heard the voices of St Michael the Archangel, St Catherine of Alexandria and St Margaret of Antioch. While we are largely dismissive of such claims in the 21st century, in the early 15th century it was not unknown for maids to claim to be guided by saints and be believed. In a less scientific world, such events were received with far less cynicism. In May 1428, guided by her voices, Joan travelled to Vaucouleurs, the nearest garrison loyal to France and the dauphin, and asked the garrison commander, Robert de Baudricourt, for permission to join the dauphin. By January 1429, she had gained the respect of the people through her quiet firmness and piety, and she finally managed to persuade Baudricourt that she was neither a witch nor feebleminded. Charles was not the most pro-active of military leaders and it took the arrival of Joan of Arc to spur him into some sort of action. Joan was supremely confident in her position at the French court. Just two months after arriving, she wrote to the duke of Bedford, the English regent in France, ordering him to "hand over to the Maiden, who is sent by God the King of Heaven, the keys to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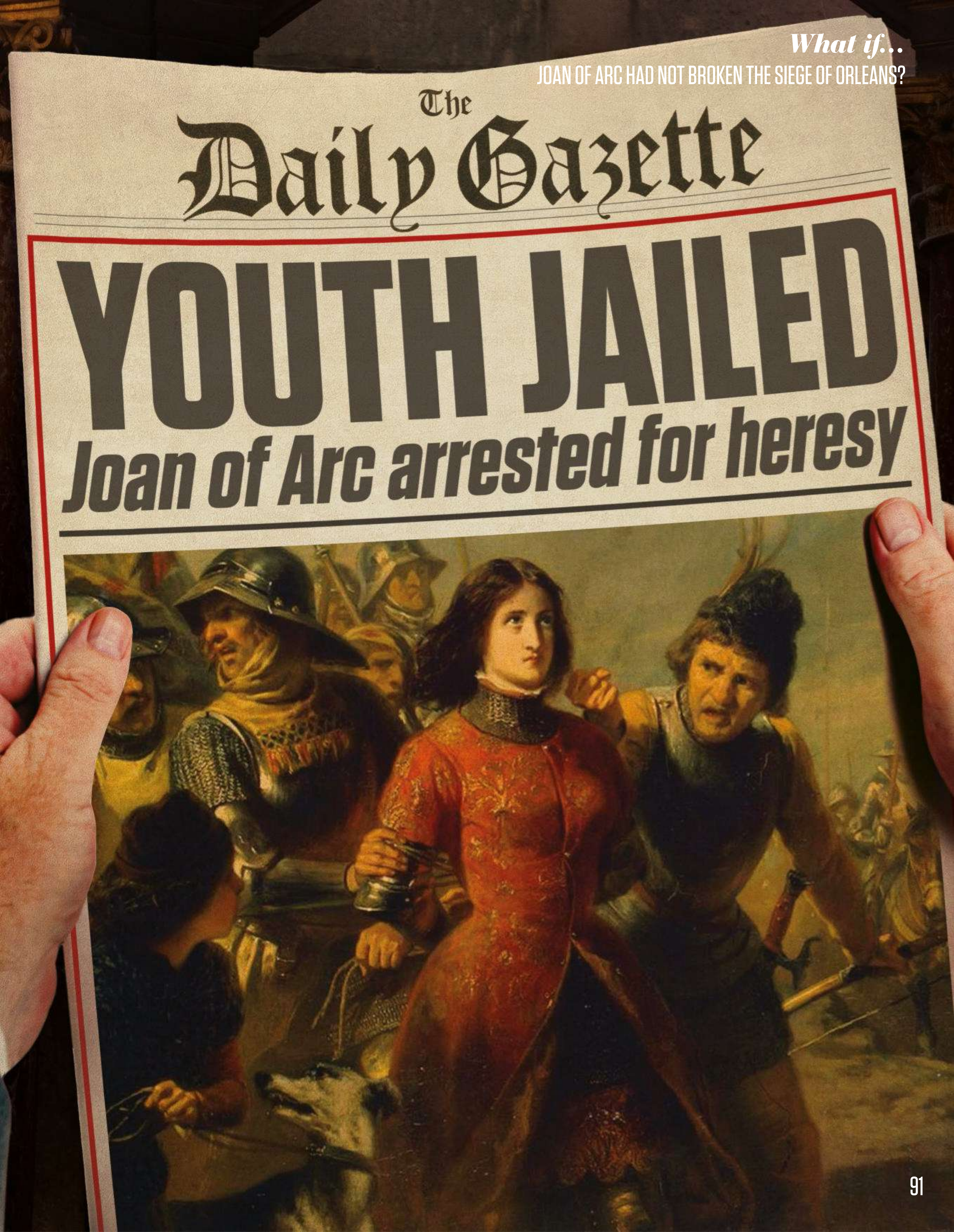
RIGHT
The Siege of Orleans would define Joan's success and her eventual fate

Main image source: © Alamy, © Getty Images



The Daily Gazette

YOUTH JAILED

Joan of Arc arrested for heresy

THE PAST

1425

VISIONS OF HOPE

At around the age of 12 or 13 Joan claimed to have first heard three voices of 'angels'. At first, they encouraged her to be pious, obedient and live a good Christian life, very much in the manner of her deeply religious mother. But as time went by the message changed. Now the voices, and in some cases visions, of the angels instructed Joan to rid France of its enemy the English, and to make sure the dauphin Charles was crowned king at Reims. Convinced she had been chosen by God for the task, Joan set out to accomplish her goal.

1429

KING MAKER

Despite a mix of scepticism and outright disbelief at Joan's claims, she used her unwavering faith and self-belief to persuade enough influential people to get an audience with the dauphin, Charles, heir to the throne of France. Charles in turn was not completely convinced by her, and had his ecclesiastical advisors question her extensively. It would seem, however, that he was willing to take a chance. Joan fulfilled her promise to lift the Siege of Orleans and also played a significant role in the crowning of the new King Charles VII at Reims, as she had predicted.

1431

MARTYR TO THE CAUSE

Joan's brief yet intense military career was not all plain sailing. She failed to take Paris but did succeed in liberating several towns from the English. But it was her capture by forces of the duke of Burgundy that was to lead to her downfall. Eventually put on ecclesiastical trial for heresy, the strength of her defence when questioned forced the proceedings be moved from public view into private session to save embarrassment for her inquisitors. Many charges were dropped, but ironically it was the heretical act of dressing like a man that stuck, resulting in Joan being sentenced to death and burnt at the stake.

all the towns which you have taken and violated in France. She has come here in the name of God to support the Royal Family [of France]. She is quite prepared to make peace, if you are willing to do right so long as you give up France and make amends for occupying it." That's an impressive amount of confidence for a teenage peasant!

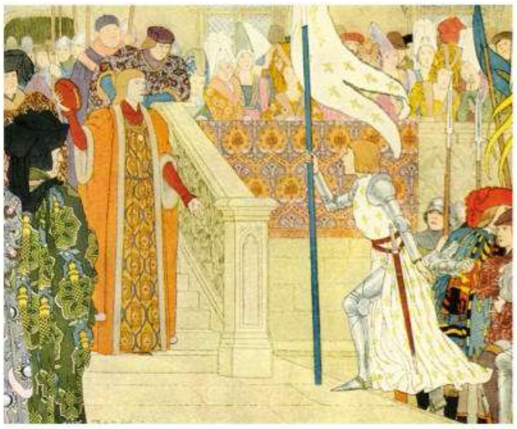
How do you think she would have reacted if she'd failed to break the Siege of Orleans? What action would she have taken?
I don't think Joan would have seen failure as a possibility. She broke the siege in four days. It is possible that she could have taken longer, and that she may have needed reinforcements, but she had staked everything on taking Orleans – failure was not an option. The siege was broken by systematically taking the forts that the English had erected to encircle the city. If the French had not been able to do this, then other tactics could've been used, such as besieging the besiegers. The battle would've lasted longer and expended men and supplies, and would not have cemented Joan's reputation in quite the same way as breaking the siege in just four days did.

What was Joan's possible fate had she not broken the siege?
Had she not broken the siege, I am not sure she would have been given a second chance. She had told her interrogators at Poitiers that she would prove herself at Orleans – it was make or break for her. In medieval times, men were even more reluctant than nowadays to take orders from a woman – let alone an uneducated teenage peasant girl. The best she could have hoped for was to be sent home with an instruction to 'never come back'. The more likely outcome would have been execution for embarrassing the dauphin and the leaders of the French royal court.

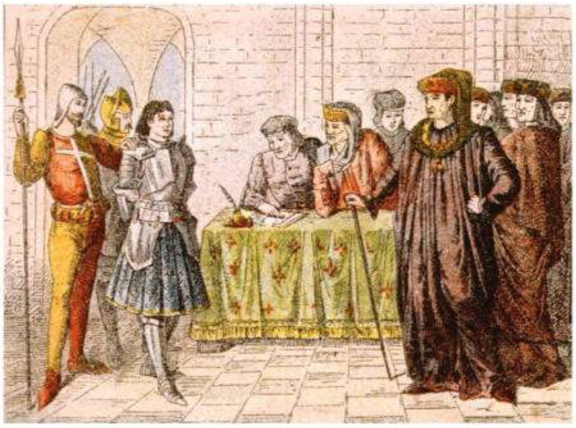
How weakened would the French Church and Crown have been without Joan as a rallying point in the war?
I'm not sure France could have been weakened any more than it already was. Joan appeared at one of the lowest points in French history. At the time of her birth, France had endured years of intermittent warfare with successive English kings since Edward III had attempted to assert their claims to its crown. Civil war between the Armagnac and Burgundian factions at the French court had practically paralysed the country at the turn of the century, making her susceptible to renewed English aggression. Far from being a united country, a great part of France was made up of semi-independent duchies, such as Burgundy and Brittany, whose rulers often sided with the English against their French overlord. In the early 1400s France was ruled by Charles VI, a king with such mental problems that, at times, he thought that he was made of glass. English 'diplomacy' following their great victory at the Battle of Agincourt in October 1415 had persuaded Charles VI to disinherit his own son, the Dauphin Charles, and name Henry V of England as his heir. With Charles not being the most pro-active of military leaders, it is hard to see where a breakthrough could have been made had Joan of Arc not come along.

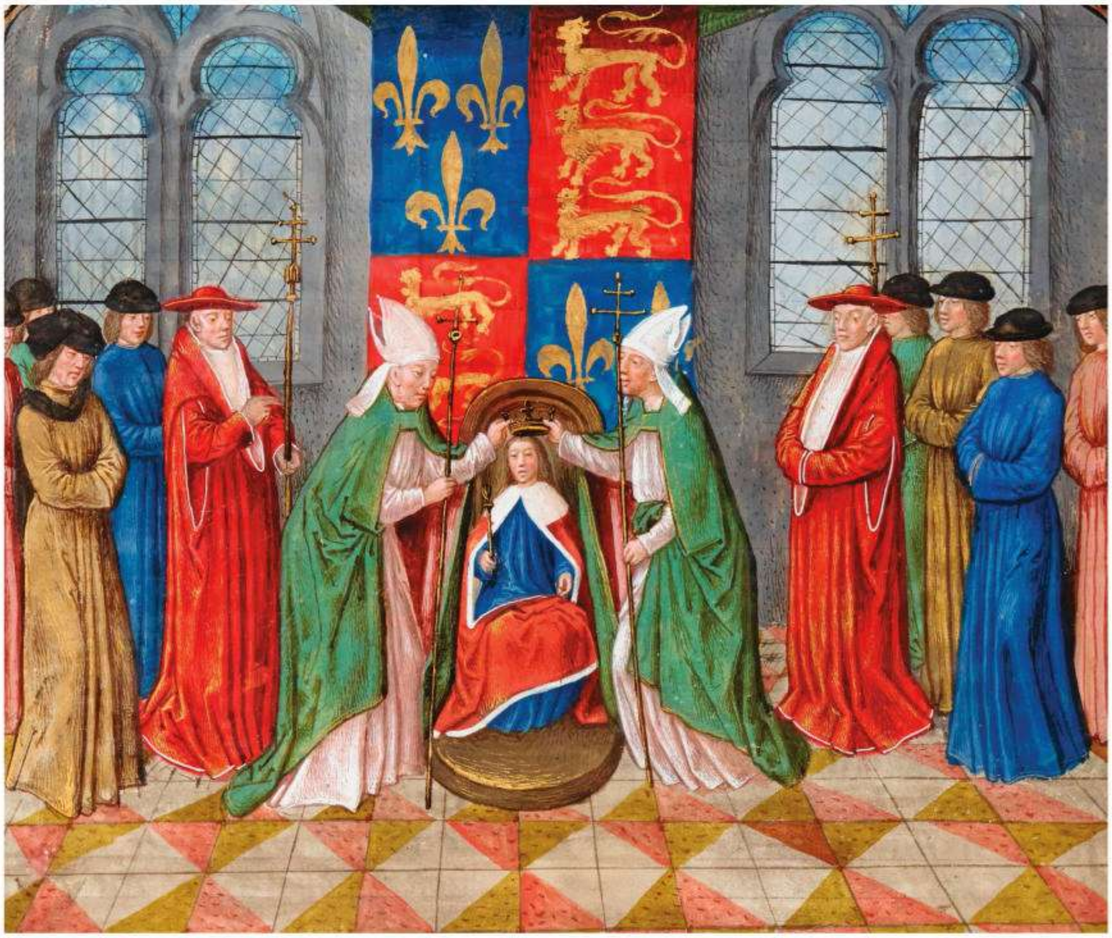
Was Joan truly a major influence on events and decisions, or just a puppet of the major players in the war?
The triumphs of Joan of Arc were remarkable due not only to the fact she was a simple country girl, but also because she was a teenager – and a girl! The king of France considered her contribution to be significant and remarkable. In the last days of December 1429, he issued letters patent ennobling Joan, her parents and her brothers. She was a peasant no longer, and her whole family was given recognition

BELOW-LEFT
Some nobles were unhappy with Joan's role in the coronation of Charles VII



BELOW-RIGHT
Joan was strong and defiant at her trial





ABOVE A young Henry VI of England was crowned king of France but was never recognised by the French

for the contribution Joan had made to getting Charles crowned and to France's extraordinary recovery. She'd done what no one else in France had been able to do: she had led the fight back against the English and given France and its king back their dignity. And yet she was still a pawn for powerful men in the greater conflict; the English saw her destruction as essential to victory over the French and Charles VII would not lift a finger to help her for fear it would jeopardise the brokering of peace with the duke of Burgundy.

How significant to subsequent events were Joan's trial and execution by the English and inevitable martyrdom by the French?

Joan's trial and execution was a political necessity if the English were ever to regain the upper hand in the war against France. Or, maybe, it was a sign of English desperation? They knew they were losing and were not going down without a fight. Joan's death did not change the outcome of the war when all is said and done. An inquiry into her trial, in 1456, heard from those present at her execution, who said that they didn't doubt her salvation and that she died a faithful Christian. The inquiry had been ordered by Pope Callixtus III following appeals from Joan's family. Charles VII had conducted an initial inquiry in 1450 but the pope's hearings went further, revoking and annulling the 1431 sentence; Joan was innocent. However, she would not be canonised until the 20th century – on 16 May 1920 Pope Benedict XV declared her a saint with her feast day on 30 May, the date of her death. Joan of Arc is the epitome of the medieval heroine. It is incredible to think what she achieved at such an early age, in so short a time; her story takes up less than three years of French history and yet it resonates through the ages. Her military career lasted just 18 months but, in that time, she took numerous towns and cities, her greatest achievement being the relief of Orleans, which secured the loyalty of much of northern France to the French crown. She revitalised the French army and people, saw her king crowned, almost took Paris, and put France on the road that would eventually see it victorious in the Hundred Years' War. With no formal military training she led armies into battle at 17. With no education, she advised her king on policy and military tactics, and managed to hold her own against the greatest theologians her enemies could bring against her.

THE POSSIBILITY

1429

FROM DAUPHIN TO NOTHING

It could be argued that, with all his dithering in the face of the English threat, without the passionate drive of Joan of Arc the future Charles VII may never have become king at all. Her belief in divine intervention was the driving force behind his coronation, having safely escorted him through enemy territory to make it happen just the way she'd been told by the angels. A weak dauphin, without Joan's success at Orleans to prove God was on his side, would have been an easy target for the English to cement their claim to the throne.

1444

A VERY DIFFERENT DYNASTY

A truce between the English and French caused rejoicing on both sides, but a marriage between Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou – a niece of Charles VII by marriage – could seal the deal. But if Orleans had not fallen, and the war had gone the way of the English, such a marriage may not have been necessary. If Henry had married someone else, then the possibilities of his heirs creating an altogether different dynastic path in history is possible. If so, then there may have been no Wars of the Roses, no Richard III, and even no Tudors!

1453 ONWARDS

UNITED KINGDOM OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE

With the claim of Charles VII not successful, the English with the upper hand, and an English king of both England and France, there would have been far more possibilities for a firm English grip on France, both in land and power, rather than the fractured pieces of territory and shallow title future monarchs would inherit. Their joint resources would have proved troublesome for other powers in Europe, particularly Spain, giving the English throne far greater influence far sooner than was the case in reality.

NGLISH SPOK

All images © Alamy

What if...

THE QING DYNASTY HAD REFORMED SOONER?

A clash of tradition and reform, plus the greed of global powers, threatened a dynasty's birth as a modern nation

INTERVIEW WITH

© José Anton

Linda Jaivin

Linda is an essayist, translator, cultural commentator and the author of 12 books, including the acclaimed *The Shortest History of China*. She lives in Sydney, Australia.

By the 17th century the Ming Dynasty was desperate and weak. The Manchu peoples of the northeast were asked to help, but instead took their opportunity, captured the capital Beijing, and the Qing Dynasty was born. The country grew, along with stronger trade links with the Western powers. Chinese goods were all the rage, but European demands were ruthless, their response to resistance brutal, and the social and political cost was high. Internal strife and rival factions all but fractured the country, but could hundreds of years of Qing rule prevail?

To what extent was the appetite for Chinese goods in the West a curse for Chinese society and its rulers?

It was a terrible curse, but only because countries like Great Britain didn't want to pay for the tea, silk and porcelain they desired, especially if China wasn't going to buy anything from them in return. The Chinese had no hunger for the goods produced by the West, or as the Qianlong emperor told British envoy Lord Macartney in 1793: "I set no value on objects strange or ingenious and have no use for your country's manufactures."

To correct the balance of trade, and ensure the silver wasn't just flowing in one direction, Great Britain came up with the appalling idea of selling opium produced from Indian poppies into China, against the will of the Qing court, fostering widespread addiction. When the Qing court banned the import of opium, closing their ports to British trade, British warships blasted them open again. The Opium Wars – the second of which involved France as well – resulted in the first of what the Chinese accurately term 'unequal treaties', a series of agreements forced upon the Qing by imperialist powers (including Japan) over the 19th and early 20th centuries. Among other things, the treaties allowed foreign powers to carve out semi-colonial possessions ('concessions') in port cities including Shanghai and awarded Hong Kong to Great Britain. The treaties humiliated the Qing, eroded Chinese sovereignty, crippled China's economy and created immense hardship for its people. They also helped to spark the reformist and revolutionary movements that brought not just the Qing, but some 2,000 years of dynastic history, to an end.

Did the influence and military dominance of the West, especially Britain, in the Opium Wars and the Boxer Uprising only serve to keep China how the West wanted it to be?

To the extent that the Western powers wanted China to be weak and acquiescent to their demands, the answer would have to be yes, for a time. All the imperialist powers, which by the late 19th century included Japan, saw China primarily in terms of how it could best serve their needs, whether that be for natural resources, products or goods, or expanding spheres of influence. Yet for all the bullying, and the firepower behind it, the West could not possibly mould China – a large and populous country with an ancient and materially, aesthetically and intellectually sophisticated civilisation – to its own needs.

But just as 'China' was never a homogenous mass available for shaping by external powers, neither was the 'West'

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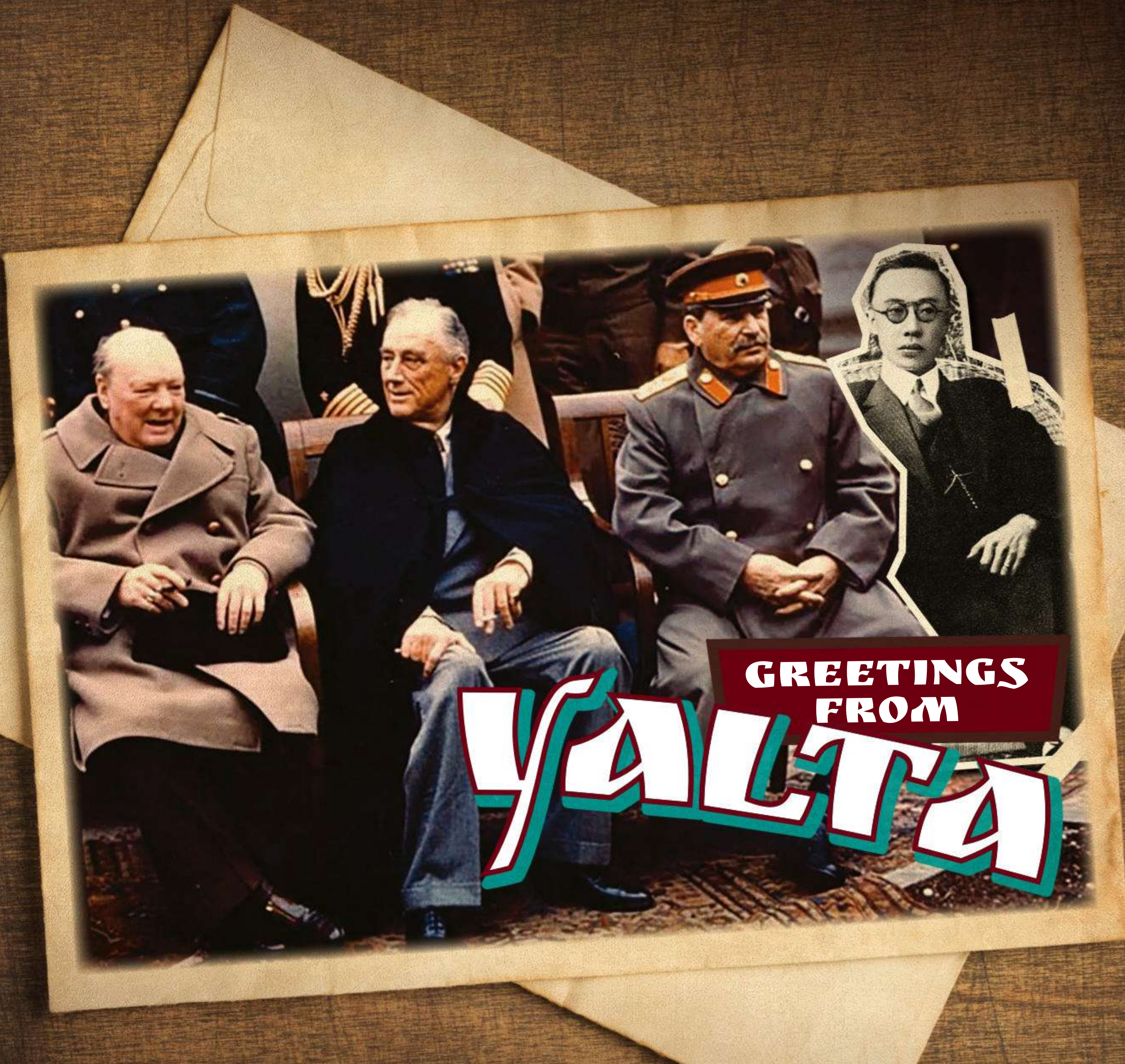
RIGHT
The Forbidden City, Beijing, is a monument to the cold isolation of dynastic rule


GREETINGS FROM
YALTA

united in its views on China. Voltaire, for example, believed that the strength of traditional Chinese moral philosophy brought Christianity's claim on being the ultimate interpreter of morality into question. He (somewhat romantically) admired Confucius and considered that Western governments could learn quite a lot from the philosopher princes he imagined the emperors to be.

Did China under the Qing have a crisis of identity and of purpose? If so, how much more difficult was reform because of it?

China under the Qing experienced multiple crises, including some that preceded Western interference in its affairs. In the 18th century, the Qianlong emperor greatly expanded the borders of his realm. He conquered, for example, the large north-western territory and Uyghur homeland that he called Xinjiang, 'new frontier', incorporating it and Tibet into the empire. But these areas remained restive: Xinjiang had to be re-conquered in the 19th century following a series of rebellions. A bigger country demanded a bigger public service, too, but the bureaucracy did not grow in proportion to the population, which had reached some 300 million by the late 18th century. There were pressures on the food supply and a no-longer fit-for-service taxation regime, but without enough public servants the Qing was unable to keep on top of the increasingly complex problems of its population and soon faced multiple rebellions, some widespread and violent.

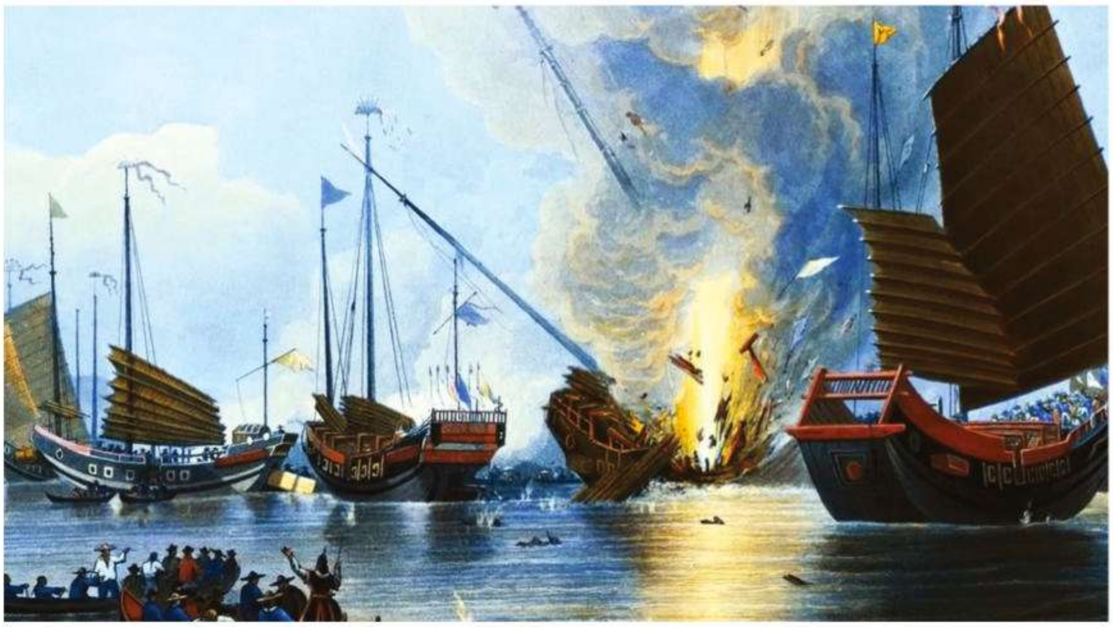
It was the crises themselves, including those brought on by Western aggression, that brought about demand for reform. By the 1860s they had the example of Meiji Restoration Japan, which despite having a similar culture and an emperor, had remade itself into a strong and modern state. Thinkers began to question what it would take to do the same for China.

Did royal isolation, poor political judgement and reputation of its Qing rulers, the rule of Empress Cixi, and a weak military mean the Qing's fate was inevitable?

The early Qing emperors Kangxi (r.1661-1722) and Qianlong (r.1735-96) each made six inspection tours of the realm, checking on irrigation and flood control and other aspects of national life and economy. But the traditional system of dynastic governance, resting on a tiered, nationwide public service that reported back to the court theoretically already kept emperors in touch with what was going on. Historians tend to hold the early Qing emperors in high regard, and Qianlong is said to have presided over a shengshi, 'golden age'.

The Empress Dowager Cixi was a complex and intelligent woman who certainly had her flaws, but she can't be blamed for everything that went wrong in the late Qing. By the time she assumed the role of co-regent for the first of two young imperial heirs in 1861, the Qing was already in decline and crisis, faced with unprecedented foreign aggression on the one hand and the massive and violent Taiping Rebellion (one of several at the time) on the other. It's unclear how anyone unable to directly command the court could've managed much better than she did, at least in the years leading to her nephew's majority. Blaming Cixi for

BELOW
Chinese war junks were no match for the might of the British Navy



THE PAST

1644

GROWING PAINS

With the dawn of the Qing dynasty came the expansion of territory, and the move towards more singular traditions and even language. China was not yet a single nation in the modern sense, but the Qing smartly kept some Ming officials while also seeking to influence all its many component regions in their own ways and customs. It was a rocky road, with conflict between those pushing for modern reform and those clutching to past traditions and cultural identity almost continually at odds with each other, leaving the people unsettled and their future uncertain.

1839-99

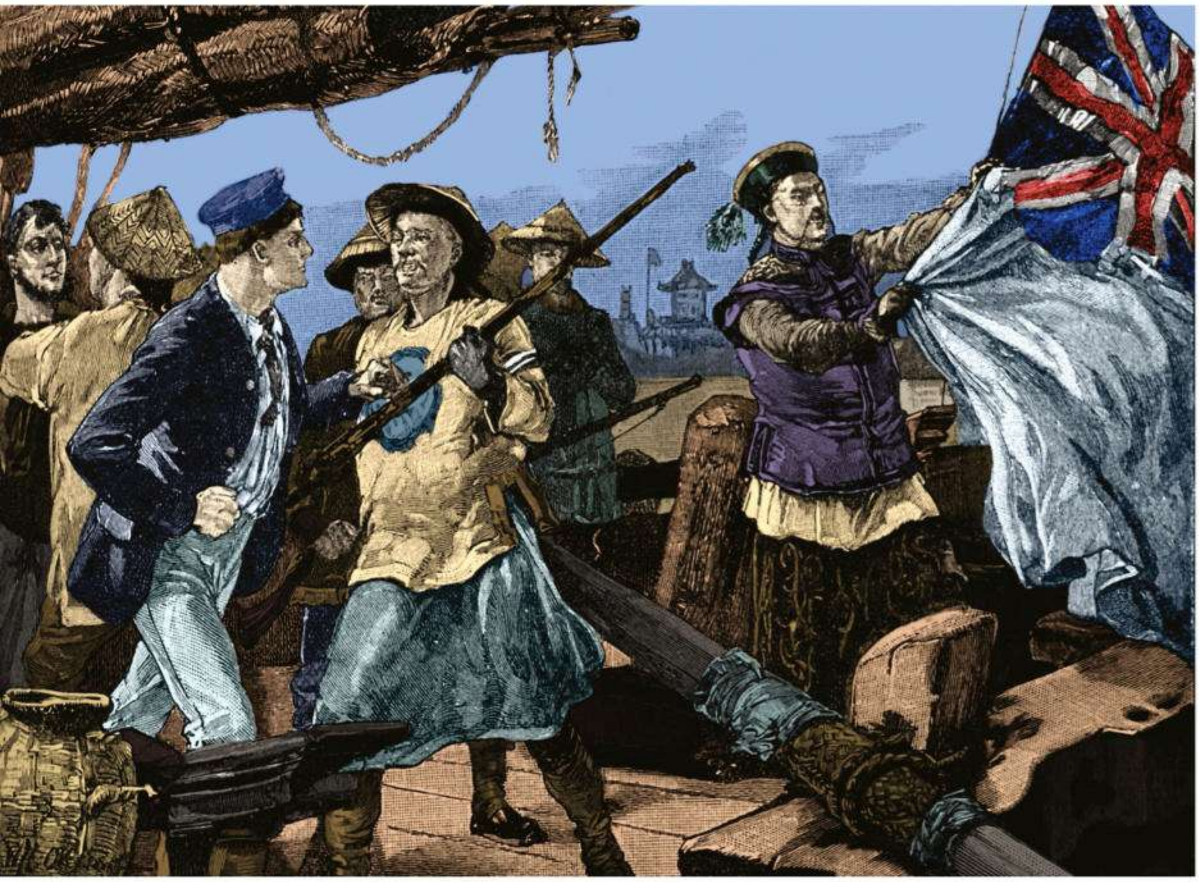
AN ADDICTIVE TRADE AND BLOODY UPRISING

During the Victorian era Great Britain had become fascinated with all things Chinese. Tea and porcelain was much sought after but there was no balance of trade and the British wanted a return. The brutal solution – flood China with opium from India to create addicts who would pay well to feed their habit. The two Opium Wars against Britain showed China's military weakness and total western dominance. The Boxer Uprising of 1899 was a bloody backlash against all foreigners, but it did not stop those same foreign powers continuing to dominate Chinese trade, politics and society.

1898

TOO LITTLE TOO LATE

The Qing Dynasty had its best and final chance at reform in 1898. The young Emperor Guangxu, finally ruling in his own right, endorsed several reforms for modernising China's industry, agriculture, military and governance. Unfortunately, a suspicious Dowager Empress Cixi put Guangxu under effective palace arrest, retook the regency and had the reformists who failed to flee beheaded, ending what is now known as the 100 Day Reforms. Such royal brutality shows just how distanced the ruling class were from the reality of the modern world, the needs of their people, and the harm it would eventually cause in changing the path of the country forever.



ABOVE
Foreign powers were feared but came to be resented and hated

everything that went wrong is almost a misogynistic sport in China, but it's a perspective that Chinese historians have increasingly come to question. If anything made the Qing's fall inevitable, it was the pressures inflicted on it by Great Britain and other imperialist powers.

Did the influence of religion and belief create a barrier to reforms? What could have been done?

Qing-era reformers may have despaired of the superstitious and fatalistic aspects of popular practices of Buddhism and Daoism. Many openly detested the conservative influence on society and politics of state Confucianism, with its stress on moderation in all things, hierarchies of authority, and propriety. But it's probably more relevant to say that the full weight of 2,000 years of dynastic rule, added to the deeply embedded fear of division, chaos and violence in the absence of autocratic control, was far more of an impediment to reform than any particular faith. It is true that the most emblematic representatives of anti-reform, the Boxers, cultishly embraced various aspects of traditional beliefs. On the other hand, there have been many attempts at reforms of the imperial system, some of them quite sweeping (such as those of the Song dynasty visionary Wang Anshi) and some initiated by emperors themselves (such as the first Ming emperor's decision to deny education to eunuchs in order to mitigate against their ability to interfere with political affairs – later overturned by a successor, leading to much eunuch-led trouble).

Would reforms only be at the consent of the West? What would be allowed and what would they look like?

The imperialist powers controlled the concessions, managed the collection of customs duties for the Qing, but didn't have a say in how the court ruled. Western powers weren't particularly supportive of Chinese reformists, either, given that they were all about strengthening the country, including its military defences against the West. When revolution came in 1911, the Qing had already begun the process of reform. It had appointed a National Assembly and was planning a transition to constitutional monarchy by 1917. Too little too late, of course. That said, the philosophies of the European Enlightenment, democratic systems, and practical modern ideas around such things as the virtues of physical education and sport, the liberation of women, and even policing, were a great inspiration to many Chinese reformers and revolutionaries as well.

BELOW
The Empress Dowager Cixi was the ruthless power behind the throne

THE POSSIBILITY

19TH CENTURY

NOT THE LAST EMPEROR

Had reform happened sooner then a more stable government, along with a population that was benefitting from real change, could have made all the difference to the Qing future. By modernising towards a constitutional monarchy and removing the cold distance between rulers and ruled, even perhaps placing more power in the hands of the people democratically, the decades of constant turmoil and unrest may have subsided. The voices of dissent and the propaganda machine for revolutionary change may not have succeeded.

19TH & 20TH CENTURIES

RESPECT FROM THE NEIGHBOURS

If reform of the military had been sustained and complete and a true regional power created, then the balance of power in the region may have been very different. No longer pushed around by the West and the Japanese, a militarily strong China would have had a true voice and influence. This would bring the stability to modernise effectively. With Japan having such a strong neighbour it may have thought differently about its own ambitions. Trade deals between China and the USA could have formed an uncomfortable alliance which may have made Japan think again before launching its audacious actions of WWII.

1911-49

NO LITTLE RED BOOK

With the country stronger both socially and militarily, the seeds of republicanism that grew in the years prior to the fall of the Qing dynasty may have been weaker. The Republican revolution of 1911-12 may never have happened. China may have continued to modernise with the signing of new and fairer treaties with world powers as the country took its place in the expanding global economy. Improved conditions for its people may have prevented communism taking root and there would've been no revolution of 1949, no Chairman Mao and no Little Red Book.

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What if...

NIXON HAD WON THE 1960 ELECTION?

John F Kennedy's presidency was defined by crisis, but if Richard Nixon had won the election, how would he have handled these events?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Martha Stewart

Fredrik Logevall

Fredrik is Laurence D Belfer Professor of International Affairs at Harvard University. He is the author of *JFK: Coming of Age in the American Century, 1917-1956* (Random House, 2020), as well as *Embers of War: The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (Random House, 2012), in addition to other books.

On Tuesday, 8 November 1960, the United States voted in its 35th president, John F Kennedy of the Democratic Party. Despite an incredibly close result, Kennedy was inaugurated on 20 January 1961. However, less than three-years later the 46-year-old was killed by an assassin's bullet while riding in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas. His presidency was defined by a number of dramatic moments in world history, including crises in both Berlin and Cuba. His opponent, Richard Nixon, served as president between 1969 and 1974 but resigned after the fallout from the Watergate scandal. Given the wildly different nature of both men, as well as their respective legacies, the imagination runs wild when we ask – what if Kennedy had lost the 1960 election?

What was the state of US politics in November 1960?

It would be fair to characterise the United States in November of 1960 as being in a kind of politics of consensus, with not a lot separating at least the dominant wings of the two parties. Of course on the right, there was a radical wing beginning to emerge and in the Democratic Party there were liberals who were unhappy with Kennedy, preferring Adlai Stevenson. They chastised what they saw as Kennedy's lack of true liberal credentials but again, that's not dominant within the party. Finally, African American activists and voters were understandably clamouring for change and both parties, at their conventions, were progressive and advocated for serious change in terms of civil rights. So even there, there isn't a great deal separating the two parties.

Ultimately, do you think JFK triumphed over Nixon?

In any close election, you can point to a number of different factors as being decisive – that's the very nature of close elections. An obvious explanation is that the country had more self-described Democrats than Republicans, so Kennedy already had an advantage. Nixon, however, also had an advantage in that he was following a popular incumbent. He could claim that they were going to continue where the Eisenhower years left off and it would be a powerful statement. More broadly, the economy was in pretty good shape in the autumn of 1960 – giving Nixon yet another advantage. So maybe that evened things out. However, the four televised debates really helped Kennedy. They assured voters that this less experienced, younger man had what it took to be president of the United States. But there are a variety of reasons why Kennedy prevailed in the end.

How close was the result?

It was extremely close, less so in the electoral college, but with the popular vote in particular. If Illinois and Texas had swung to Nixon, he would have been elected president. There have been suggestions that there were shenanigans by the Democrats in Illinois but even if that were true, it still wouldn't have been enough. Nixon would have needed, for example, Texas as well.

What would it have taken for Nixon to win the election?

What would Nixon have changed if he could have gone back and done it again? I think he would have done more to

Main image source: © Getty Images

RIGHT
The results of the 1960 election were extremely close – is it possible that instead of JFK we could have seen Richard Nixon elected president?

1960

John F. Kennedy
Vs
Richard Nixon
NIXON'S THE ONE!
VOTE FOR PRESIDENT
RICHARD M. NIXON
President Nixon.
Now more than ever.
NIXON

THE PAST

SEPT – OCT 1960

DEBATE DIVIDE

The 1960 election marked the first time that televised debates between the two presidential candidates took place. Four debates occurred between 26 September and 21 October, with the first of these achieving an estimated 70 million viewers. They were simultaneously broadcast on all four networks and were shown without commercials. The importance of the TV debates cannot be overstated – some have even argued that a key factor in Kennedy's victory was his charisma and natural good looks, which came across well on television.

1960

A STOLEN VICTORY?

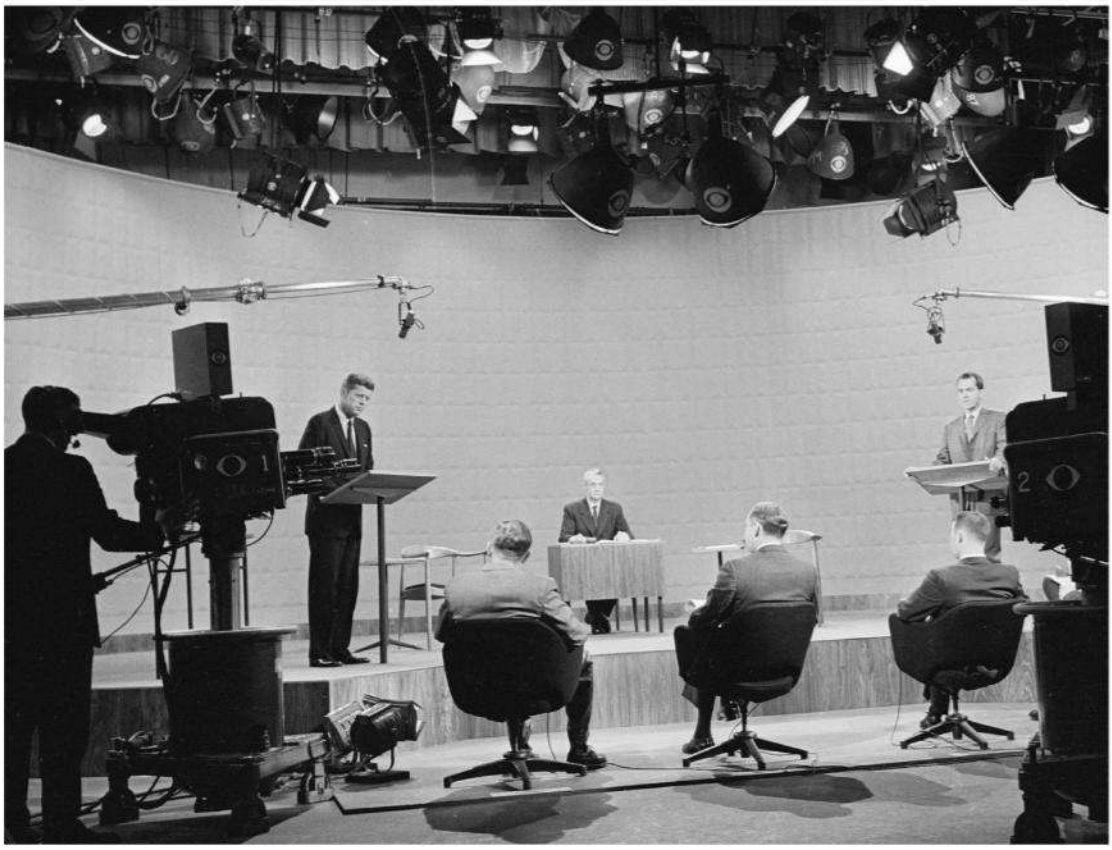
Following the election, Nixon suspected he may have been cheated out of election victory, in a situation that feels eerily reminiscent of the events following Joe Biden's 2021 election. Illinois was one of the most hotly contested areas. The matter was not helped by the fact that Mayor Richard Daley was a Kennedy supporter. Daley was also accused of fraudulent activity in Cook County, where the number of Kennedy votes was seen as "abnormal". Over the decades, historians have investigated and re-investigated the 1960 election and little evidence has appeared to prove the election was rigged. Had Kennedy lost Illinois it is unlikely it would have changed the outcome of the election and, similarly, the number of votes Kennedy received in Cook County were in fact relatively normal.

© Getty Images

22 NOV 1963

ASSASSINATION

On the 22 November 1963, three-years after his election victory, President John F Kennedy was assassinated. He was riding in a motorcade through downtown Texas when a bullet hit his neck and another his head. Shortly after his arrival at the Parkland Memorial Hospital, Kennedy was pronounced dead. The assassin was named as Lee Harvey Oswald, although in subsequent years various conspiracy theories regarding who was behind the assassination have surfaced, though no concrete evidence has emerged.



2x © Getty Images

ABOVE The 1960 election saw the first televised debates between two nominees, which may have helped Kennedy win the presidency

> " It seems far less likely that Nixon would have resisted the use of such force "

woo African American voters, he would have focused his attention more on the industrial states in the North rather than on the South and I think he would have taken back his somewhat foolish pledge to visit all 50 states. More importantly, I think Nixon should have made sure that Dwight Eisenhower came out and actively campaigned for him sooner than he did. I think it could have made a huge difference because when Eisenhower finally did hit the campaign trail, Nixon began to make up ground in the polls quite dramatically. Finally, I would say Nixon should have refused to debate. It was not something that had happened before in American politics and I think it's worth noting that in 1968 and in 1972 he did refuse, probably because of his experience in 1960. He thought he was a really good debater and he thought he could take Kennedy, but in hindsight it was a poor decision.

One of the most defining moments of JFK's presidency was the Cuban Missile Crisis. How do you think Nixon would have tackled handling this event?

My guess is that Nixon would have opted for a military solution. Most likely he would have used at least American airpower to pick out the missile sites but may even have considered an invasion. We know that as vice president he often counselled the use of military force. For example, in 1954, when the French were facing defeat in Indochina, Nixon strongly advocated for the use of at least air power to try to save the French position. We know from Kennedy's deliberations with the Executive Committee of the National Security Council, that he was really almost alone in wishing to find a political solution to the crisis. He's getting pressure from both military and civilian advisors to opt for military force. It seems to me far less likely that President Nixon would have resisted the use of such force. However, we should acknowledge that the decision to put the missiles in Cuba was partly because of policy by the Kennedy administration leading up to October 1962. We can see the beginning of this with the Bay of Pigs in 1961 (a plan hatched under Eisenhower and Nixon but nevertheless taking place under Kennedy) and other various efforts to destabilise the Castro government in Cuba. So perhaps without Kennedy

ABOVE
Would the expansion of US involvement in Vietnam have been accelerated under a 1960 Nixon administration?

we wouldn't have even had the crisis? But assuming that we do, which I think is also a reasonable assumption, Nixon most likely would have opted for a military solution.

Nixon's premiership was defined by the corruption of the Watergate scandal. Do you think that similar activities would have occurred if he had won in 1960?
I don't know the answer to that question. He was somewhat prone to paranoia with respect to his opponents. I also think he generally mistrusted the news media, and those views were there long before he became president. That might have inclined him therefore to engage in some of the same kinds of activities that we see in the Watergate scandal. His chief national security aide, Henry Kissinger, was prone to the same kind of thinking and possibly the Watergate scandal required the two of them. But it's difficult to say.

The assassination of JFK is one of the defining moments of the 20th century. So if this had never occurred, what do you think would have been the impact on the American political landscape?
Okay, so in this situation we have to ask, having lost in 1960 would Kennedy have made a run for the nomination in 1964? And if so, would he have won the nomination and then been a strong candidate for the general election that November? If he takes office as president in January of 1965, then it raises interesting questions regarding some of the important policy issues he would have faced. Where would we be with respect to the war in Vietnam? In respect to the Cold War? In respect to civil rights? To twist it slightly, if Kennedy is already president and had come back from Dallas alive, what would that have meant? Well, I do think he would have won the election in 1964 and would have had another term. This has big implications in foreign policy. He and Nikita Khrushchev had begun to take important steps to reduce the tensions in the superpower relationship. Maybe with a surviving Kennedy, they would have taken further steps in that direction, maybe to a degree that we could no longer refer to a Cold War between Russia and the United States. With respect to Vietnam, I have argued, although we can never know for sure, that a surviving Kennedy would likely have avoided the large-scale escalation of the war in the way that Lyndon Johnson, his successor, embarked upon. Which of course has extraordinary implications.

In terms of the effect of policy, would a Nixon presidency in 1960 have changed much?
I don't think it would have meant a great deal domestically. As I said before, I think they're both centrist in their views on domestic policy and I think under a President Nixon, you would have had a lot of continuity from the Eisenhower administration. You would have had Democrats in Congress putting obstacles in the way of some of the things that Nixon wanted to achieve, but I can't see that there would have been wholesale changes on the domestic side. Regarding foreign policy, there's maybe more room for differentiation, because it's a very tense time in the Cold War. Kennedy faced a lot of crises in 1961. I do think that the Bay of Pigs invasion would have occurred but it's likely that Nixon would have gone in more robustly there, using American military power. Likewise, with the Berlin Crisis of 1961, it's fascinating to think about what a President Richard Nixon would have done. Vietnam too is an interesting question. It's certainly very possible that with Nixon in the White House, the expansion of US involvement in Vietnam that happened under Kennedy would have been accelerated under Nixon, perhaps resulting in an Americanised war in Vietnam earlier than you saw it ultimately under Johnson.

THE POSSIBILITY

1960

WIN WITH EISENHOWER?

Fredrik Logevall suggests that if Eisenhower embarked on the campaign trail sooner, it may have helped Nixon win. The two men also had a slightly fractured relationship and it has been claimed that Eisenhower was angered by the decision to limit his role in the campaigning. Had Nixon involved Eisenhower more, would he have won?

1962

CALAMITY IN CUBA?

A defining moment of Kennedy's presidency is the Cuban Missile Crisis. When many suggested military action, it was Kennedy's most trusted advisor – his brother Robert – who supported a naval blockade and a diplomatic solution. In his role as vice president, Nixon often advocated for military action, so if he was president, he may have chosen a military solution. While Kennedy's response led to a general 'cooling' of tensions during the Cold War, could Nixon's have led to greater animosity between the Soviet Union and the US?

1965

INTERVENTION IN VIETNAM?

Kennedy's successor, Lyndon B Johnson, escalated the US's involvement in the Vietnam War to full-scale military intervention. Johnson ultimately struggled over Vietnam, stating to Senator Eugene McCarthy in 1968: "I know we oughtn't to be there, but I can't get out". It would be Nixon who, in 1973, ended the war in a final peace agreement with North Vietnam. However, the war continued before ending in a victory for North Vietnam, with the country unified on 2 July 1976. Given Nixon's history, had he been president in 1960 would he have pushed for military intervention sooner?

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What if...

STEPHEN OF BLOIS HAD DIED IN THE WHITE SHIP DISASTER?

Without Stephen being able to claim the crown, England may have experienced its first queen regnant

INTERVIEW WITH

© Jeni Nott

Catherine Hanley

Dr Catherine Hanley is a historian of Medieval Studies. She is the author of *Matilda: Empress, Queen, Warrior* (Yale University Press, 2019) and *Two Houses, Two Kingdoms: A History of France and England, 1100-1300* (Yale University Press, 2022).

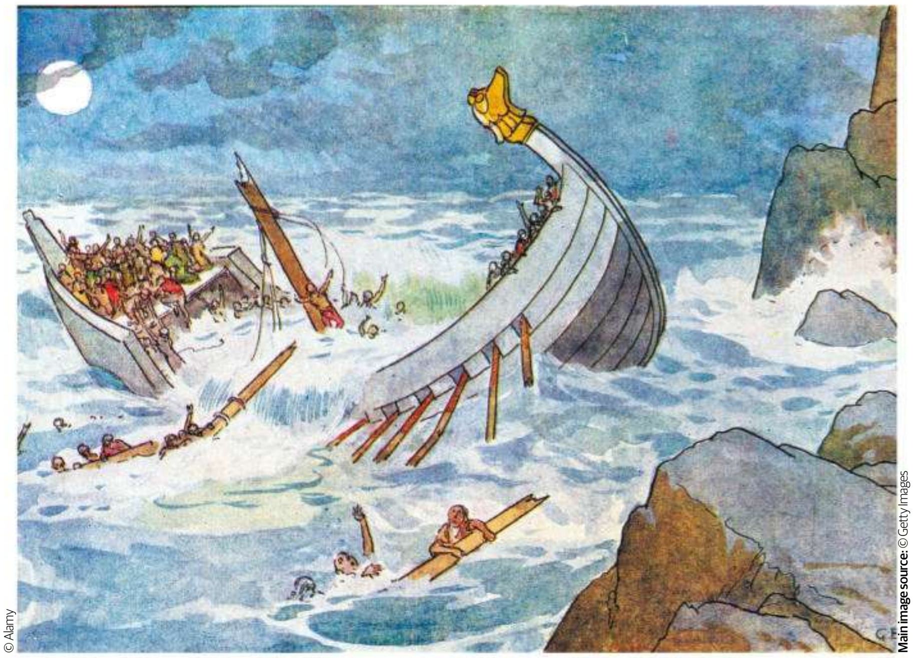
On 25 November 1120, the political status of England was thrown into chaos when a ship sank off the coast of France. The White Ship had set sail from France carrying around 300 passengers. All except one died in the disaster, including the ship's most important passenger William Adelin. William was the only legitimate son of King Henry I and heir to the English throne and with his death, England was left without a clear successor. William's sister, Empress Matilda (the wife of the Holy Roman Emperor), was the only other legitimate child of Henry I but, as a woman, was not an ideal choice.

When Henry I died 15 years after the sinking, it was Stephen of Blois, Henry's nephew, who claimed the throne and went head to head with Matilda over the crown in a civil war known as The Anarchy. However, Stephen had also meant to travel on the White Ship's fateful voyage in 1120 but disembarked before the ship set sail. If he had also died in the disaster, would the succession have been more peacefully resolved?

If Stephen of Blois had died in the White Ship disaster alongside William Adelin, would other claimants have positioned themselves to take the crown?

Yes, there would have been two main male candidates in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, in addition to Empress Matilda as the more direct but female heir. The first was William Clito, who was the son of Robert Curthose (who was himself William the Conqueror's eldest son, and Henry I's elder brother). Arguably both of them had a better right to the throne than Henry anyway, which was why Curthose was in prison and Clito in exile. Henry, naturally, did everything he could to keep Clito away from any talk of the succession, which was easy when he had a son of his own. Even after William Adelin's disastrous death, Henry was known to favour the family of his sister Adela (Stephen's mother), and especially Stephen, whom he had loaded down with favours. So even after William Adelin's death there was still a male candidate who wasn't Clito. However, if Stephen had died in the shipwreck as well, then this would have strengthened Clito's claims greatly, and I think we would have seen more of the barons coming out in support of his hereditary claims to both England and Normandy.

These claims of Clito's were certainly pressing at the time of the White Ship disaster itself, in 1120. However, by the time Henry I actually died, in 1135, and the question of his successor became urgent, Clito was already dead and therefore out of the picture. There was, however, another male relative who could be put forward: Theobald of Blois, who was Stephen's older brother. In strict hereditary terms he would have been higher up the queue than Stephen anyway – and indeed in the real world the barons of Normandy offered him the duchy after Henry I's death – but Stephen was better known in England and more popular with the Londoners who helped to get him crowned King of England, so Theobald ended up having to accept his



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RIGHT
The White Ship hit rocks and sank off the coast of France

Has anyone seen Steve?

THE PAST

25 NOVEMBER 1120

THE WHITE SHIP SINKS

The White Ship was due to carry 300 passengers to England from Normandy, France. One of the earliest known accounts of the disaster was written by William of Malmesbury who recorded that the passengers, including the crew, had gotten drunk and rowdy before it set sail. This atmosphere was the reason Stephen of Blois decided to disembark. After crashing into rocks, everybody but one passenger died, including William Adelin who initially escaped on another boat but turned back to rescue his half sister. His boat sank with the ship.

8 DECEMBER 1135

STEPHEN CLAIMS THE THRONE

King Henry I died on 1 December 1135. Before his death, Henry had made the barons swear an oath to accept his daughter, Matilda, as his successor and their new queen. However, at the time of her father's death, Matilda was living in Anjou, France with her second husband Geoffrey. She may not have even learned of her father's death before Stephen, who was situated in Boulogne, had made his way to Westminster to claim the English throne. Stephen's succession was sealed with his coronation on 22 December. Matilda, despite her father's endeavour to confirm her succession, did not have the resources to challenge her cousin at the time.

1138-1153

ANARCHY ENSUES

In 1138, Matilda decided it was time to face Stephen and fight for the crown she believed to be rightfully hers. She arrived in England alongside her half brother, Robert of Gloucester. Over the next 15 years, Matilda and Stephen's forces faced each other at a number of battles as they vied for the throne. The period of civil war came to be known as The Anarchy. Ultimately, the war was ended by the Treaty of Wallingford which agreed that Stephen would remain king until his death, but would be succeeded by Matilda's son, who became King Henry II.

brother's *fait accompli*. If Stephen had predeceased Henry I, then Theobald's claims would have been much stronger, and I think it likely that the barons, especially those who were opposed to female rule, would have offered him the crown rather than Matilda.

Would Empress Matilda have become Queen of England without Stephen able to claim the throne after Henry I's death?

On the one hand, one of the principal reasons she was usurped was that Stephen was able to react so quickly: he was the count of Boulogne and already in the best place to shoot across the Channel and claim the throne. Theobald, assuming he was Matilda's primary antagonist if Stephen was already dead, did not have this advantage so the race would have been more even.

On the other hand, there were still those barons who were dead set against the idea of female rule, so they would still have been against Matilda even if her opponent was someone other than Stephen. It's difficult to call, though in my opinion Matilda would have seemed like a more plausible candidate if her opponent had been Theobald rather than Stephen. Theobald was much less well-known and less popular than his brother. Also, with a smaller field of available adult male candidates, the claims of Matilda's infant sons might have been pushed forward more forcefully, which would have aided her cause.

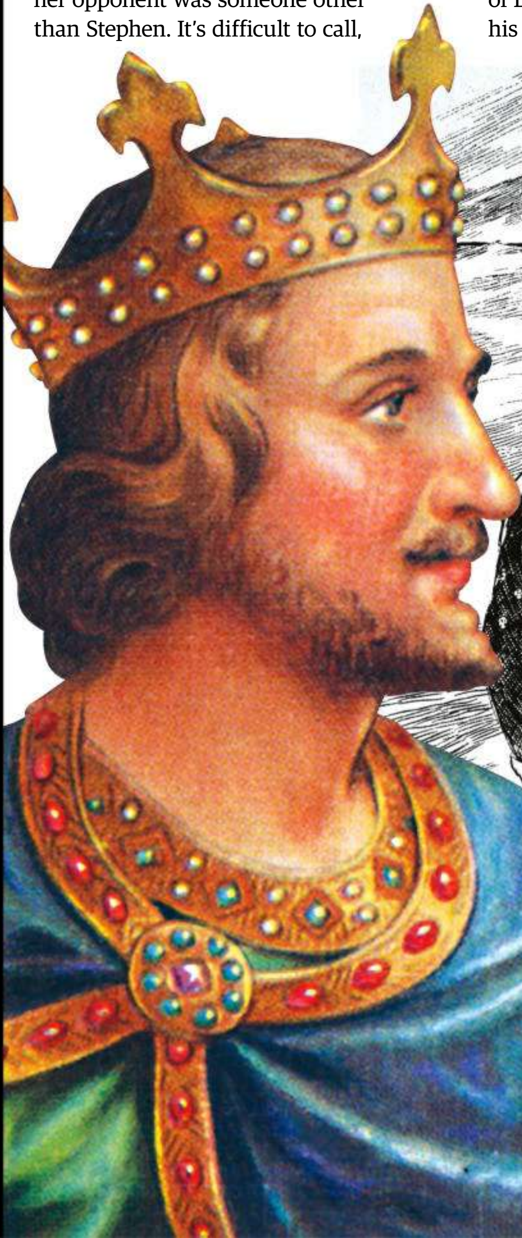
Is it possible that England might still have descended into civil war, even if Stephen had not been alive to lead forces against Matilda?

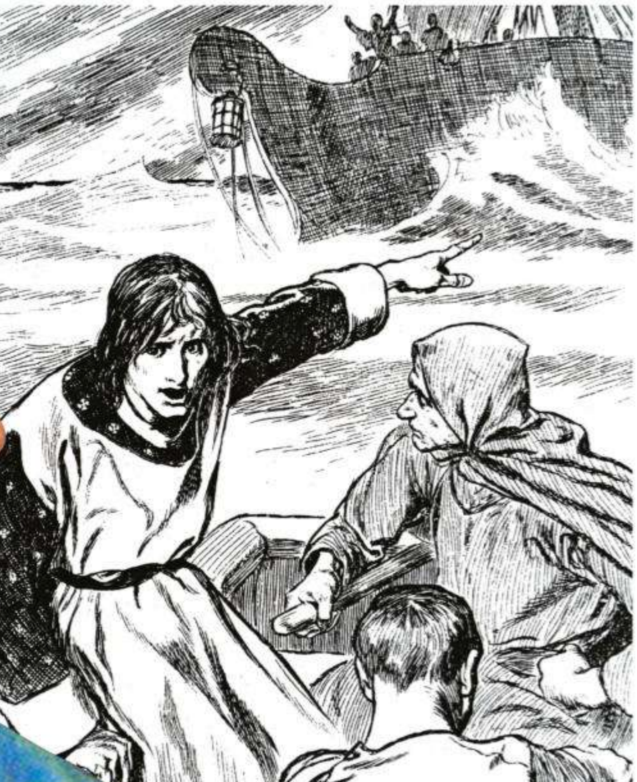
Yes: those who were against female rule would support anyone but Matilda as long as he was male and had some semblance of a claim. But I think she would have polished off Theobald more quickly, so the war wouldn't have gone on for so long, and I think she stood a much greater chance of actually winning it.

Let us not forget that at a pivotal point in the war it was Stephen's wife, the formidable and capable Matilda of Boulogne, who was commanding his forces while he was in captivity.

BELOW-LEFT Stephen of Blois, later King Stephen, disembarked the White Ship before it set sail

BELOW-RIGHT William Adelin orders his boat to return to the sinking White Ship





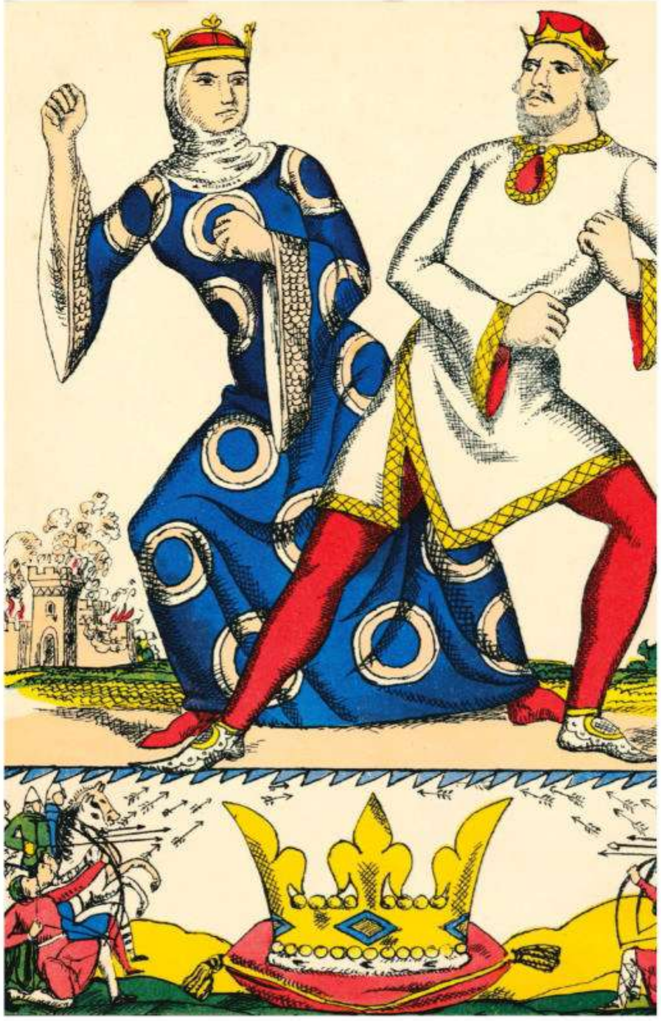
No Stephen also means no Matilda of Boulogne, which means no resistance at that crucial time. So yes to there possibly still being a war, but also yes to Empress Matilda winning it.

If Matilda had been accepted as queen, what might her reign have looked like?
I think that Matilda personally would have made a more than adequate ruling monarch – she was clever, well-educated and politically experienced. With no war to contend with she could focus on longer-term strategies rather than simply firefighting, and I think that her background might have inclined her to do more in the way of making international alliances than Stephen ever did.

However, whether she would have been able to do all this without mini-rebellions and revolts springing up all over the place is a different matter. There would still have been either a majority or a significant minority of barons who were opposed to the entire concept of a female ruling monarch, and this would have come back to bite Matilda, so that her reign as a whole (as opposed to her personal performance) would have been something of a disaster.

Every king makes the occasional misstep – Stephen certainly had more than his fair share – but in Matilda's case this would have been seized upon as evidence that women were not suited to ruling. She would have been in a Catch-22 situation: if she was authoritative and commanding she would be 'unwomanly' and unnatural, and therefore unfit to rule; but if she was too yielding then this would have been put down to a womanly softness which also made her unfit to rule. Stephen's mistakes were always his own: nobody ever used them as an excuse to say that men were temperamentally unsuited to rule. But we have to allow for the extreme double standards that Matilda would have encountered, and I don't think she would ever have had a peaceful five minutes.

Would there have been any ramifications to the succession of the crown if Matilda had ruled England instead of Stephen?
This is one of the few things that wouldn't have ended up being all that different. In real life the war was fought to a standstill, and the agreement was that Stephen would remain king for life but that he would be succeeded by Matilda's son, Henry, rather than his own son, Eustace. If Matilda had ruled, she would still have been succeeded by Henry II. The only real question is whether she would have reigned until her death (in 1167, by which time Henry would have been in his mid-thirties) or whether she would have moved aside earlier in order to let Henry take over as soon as he was old enough and competent enough to do so. My guess on that, incidentally, is that she would have preferred the former but been obliged to settle for the latter.



ABOVE
Stephen and Matilda fought for the English crown in a period known as The Anarchy

How do you think historians would regard Matilda's queenship today if she had been allowed to rule without Stephen's opposition?
I'm afraid the general consensus would be that her reign was a bit of a disaster – again, not because she was personally useless, but because she would have been judged by different and impossible standards (by modern historians as well as contemporaries). People would point either to the fact that she couldn't keep control, or that she was too controlling, and she would never be able to win. I don't think it was Matilda's fault, particularly, but in the 12th century England simply wasn't ready for a female king.

THE POSSIBILITY

25 NOVEMBER 1120

ANOTHER DROWNED HEIR

If Stephen had not been perturbed by the unruly entourage of the ship's crew, it is likely that he would also have died onboard when the White Ship went down off the coast of Normandy. It is likely that little would have been made of Stephen's drowning, as in 1120 he was a fairly insignificant name who would have been an unlikely choice to become the heir to the English throne. However, he was favoured by his uncle, the king, and so his loss may have been felt at court. With Stephen dead and another 15 years before the death of Henry I, there was still plenty of time for other candidates to stake their claims to the throne.

DECEMBER 1135

MATILDA BECOMES QUEEN

Upon the death of her father and with no Stephen to race to Westminster and claim the throne, it is highly likely that Matilda would have inherited the crown with little opposition. While the English barons may not have been thrilled to have a female ruler, they had sworn an oath to Henry I saying they would accept Matilda as his successor. Without Stephen there to give the barons a viable alternative, Matilda would likely have had her coronation at Westminster Abbey. It is also likely that any opposition from claimants such as Theobald would probably have presented itself after she became queen.

1135-1167

REBELLION AGAINST THE CROWN

Even if Matilda had become queen regnant, that is not to say that she would have had a peaceful time on the throne. As a female ruler she was bound to run into opposition from barons and noblemen who doubted her ability to rule effectively. With other male claimants to the throne still alive, it is very possible that a rebellion movement with a male heir as a figurehead would have challenged Matilda for her throne. She would likely have spent the majority of her reign desperately trying to consolidate her power.

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What if...

STALINGRAD HAD FALLEN TO THE NAZIS?

How might a Nazi victory have broken Russian courage and changed the war on the Eastern Front?

INTERVIEW WITH

© D Stone

Dr David R Stone

David teaches in the Strategy and Policy Department of the US Naval War College. He received his PhD in Russian history from Yale University and is the author of numerous books and dozens of articles on Russian and Soviet military history. His most recent book is titled *The Russian Army in the Great War: The Eastern Front, 1914-1917.*

• These views are David's own and not any official position of the US government.

It is a battle still celebrated today in modern Russia as the very heart and soul of their courage and fortitude against an invading army. On the surface, the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact of 1939 between Hitler and Stalin gave each what they wanted. But Hitler wanted more. Extra land for the German people and the annihilation of the Slavs were central to his plan. All went well, until Stalingrad stood firmly in his way. The city's refusal to break came at a terrible cost in lives. But if the Nazis had managed to defeat the Soviet forces and taken the city, how might the Eastern Front, and the rest of the war, have been different?

Would the Nazis have continued their expansion eastwards and what may this have looked like?

I don't think that's likely. When the Germans got to Stalingrad in late summer 1942 and began the months-long struggle for the city, the German military was already stretched to breaking point. Keep in mind – the battle for Stalingrad was only part of a much bigger campaign. In spring and summer 1942, Hitler had sent his Wehrmacht on an offensive through eastern Ukraine and southern Russia, aiming at the Caucasus. The goal was oil: some in Chechnya but far more around Baku, in present-day Azerbaijan. Hitler's empire in Europe had very few sources of oil – basically limited to some from Romania. That wasn't nearly enough to wage the global war that Hitler was now caught up in. The oil resources of Baku were enormous. Hitler's hope was to make it to the shores of the Caspian Sea and use that oil to fuel his war.

Stalingrad ended up part of this campaign because it lay on the left flank of the German move towards the Caucasus. The Germans couldn't afford to leave Stalingrad in Soviet hands – it was a potential base of operations for the Soviets to cut off the German drive for oil. The propaganda benefit of taking the city named for Joseph Stalin was a nice bonus. But the distances involved were enormous. The German jumping-off point in spring 1942, already deep inside the Soviet Union, was 1,000 kilometres (621 miles) from Baku, and there wasn't much of a transportation network in between for the Germans to commandeer. And, of course, the Soviets made sure to wreck anything of value. As it was, the Germans had to stretch their resources very thin to make the push for Baku. While they managed to get awfully close, the eventual Soviet victory at Stalingrad forced them to withdraw in early 1943.

If the Germans HAD won at Stalingrad, it MIGHT have solved some of their resource problems. But even if that had happened, German manpower and logistics couldn't have sustained much beyond what they were trying to do in 1942. Even by late 1941, well before Stalingrad started, the German military

Main image source: © Alamy

RIGHT
Hitler's instructions were to win Stalingrad at any cost

THE PAST

22 JUNE 1941

RENEGING ON THE DEAL

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Having used the non-aggression pact with the USSR to his own advantage, Hitler was now ready to turn the tides and push eastwards. The beginning of Operation Barbarossa saw a rapid and deadly assault from land and air deep into Soviet territory. Despite greater numbers of men and equipment, the Soviets were quickly overwhelmed and encircled, leading to the surrender of hundreds of thousands. By December 1941, despite being on the outskirts of Moscow, Barbarossa had stalled, and the Russian winter began to take its toll on the German forces.

17 JULY 1942

THE SLAUGHTER BEGINS

The assault on Stalingrad was to see some of the most ferocious, brutal, and bloody close-hand combat of the entire war. Fighting street by street, within a month the Soviet general, Vasily Chuikov, and his men were pushed into a strip along the Volga River. Stalin had refused to allow civilians to be evacuated, telling the city's defenders, "not one step back", in the belief that having their fellow Russians so closely in harm's way would prove to be the greatest motivation the Soviet troops could have. It was a huge price to pay in Soviet lives.

NOV 1942 – FEB 1943

THE TIDE TURNS

The Soviet counteroffensive aimed to turn the German's own tactics back on themselves. Instead of striking back at the Nazi forces head-on, General Georgy Zhukov sent his troops around the flanks, overwhelming Romanian forces and encircling the German lines. Now trapped, an attempt was made to breach the Soviet lines by Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, but was unsuccessful. The encircled commander of the Sixth Army, General Friedrich Paulus, creates a plan – Operation Thunderclap – but this was vetoed by Hitler, who wanted Stalingrad defended to the last. It is clear Paulus did not agree, allegedly telling his generals; "I will not shoot myself for this Bohemian Corporal", and he surrendered his forces. It has been estimated that across both sides in the Battle of Stalingrad, there were up to two million deaths and casualties.

> " The biggest effect if the Soviets lost at Stalingrad would likely have been economic loss of access to oil "

was worrying about finding enough able-bodied men. And keep in mind – there wasn't a simple way to get oil from the Caspian Sea back to Germany for fuelling the fight against the Western allies.

What would a Nazi win at Stalingrad have meant for the Russian war effort, its people, and the challenges facing the Russian leadership?
Just the fight for Stalingrad was bad enough. The city was a major industrial centre, not least for Soviet tank production. As the Germans approached Stalingrad at the end of August 1942, Hitler's Luftwaffe carried out major bombing raids that devastated the city. Once the battle for the city itself started, it got much worse. The city, with all its factories, was essentially levelled.

Perhaps an even more important issue was what the Battle of Stalingrad meant for Soviet transportation and fuel. Stalingrad sits along the western bank of the Volga River, and the Volga was – and still is – a major transportation artery. In particular, the Soviet Union in WWII didn't have much of a pipeline network, so the vast majority of the oil produced in Baku got to the rest of the Soviet Union by ship – across the Caspian Sea and then up the Volga.

Starting in summer 1942, German bombers were already dropping mines in the Volga and sinking river traffic. When the Germans reached the banks of the Volga itself, traffic was completely halted. Oil started to back up in Baku as well as on the tankers in Astrakhan. The Soviets had to turn to an alternate and much less efficient route. Oil now had to go to Guryev (now Atyrau in Kazakhstan), up the Ural River, and then by rail to the rest of the Soviet Union. The Volga was closed from summer 1942 through to April 1943, and that was even with the Soviet victory.

If the Germans had won at Stalingrad, the Volga would have been closed longer, perhaps permanently. In the best case for the Soviets, they'd be stuck for a longer time with a much less efficient delivery of oil to fuel their war. In the worst case for the Soviets, German victory at Stalingrad would have allowed them to make it all the way to Baku, and the Soviets would have lost that oil entirely. That would have put the Soviet leadership in an even tougher position and might have made them rethink whether to seek a separate peace.

Could the Germans have maintained resources for two active fronts?
By this point, Germany was already badly stretched. Winning at Stalingrad, though, would actually have eased Germany's problems a bit. Taking Stalingrad would let the Germans put part of the front line on the Volga River, which would have made for a more defensible position. Taking Stalingrad would also have made it more likely that Hitler would have been able to reach the oil fields of Baku on the Caspian Sea, which would have solved one of his resource problems.

What impact would such a victory have on morale of the German people and how might the Nazi propaganda machine have benefitted from it?
No doubt Joseph Goebbels' propaganda machine would have made a great deal out of the capture of Stalingrad – the city of Stalin. But morale was not a problem for Hitler's regime. There was no significant internal resistance at this point. That only came later, when the war was clearly lost. And German soldiers fought even harder when the war turned against Germany. There was a pretty good sense among German soldiers and civilians of what Soviet victory and Soviet occupation would mean for Germans, after all the horrific crimes they had committed against the Soviet people.

The real question was how Hitler was going to compensate for the enormous material and manpower advantages of the Allies, not whether he could get his people to actually fight.

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How might the Western Allies have viewed such a victory by the Nazis and what action would they need to have taken?

It certainly would have been a major morale blow, which would partially offset the Allied successes at El Alamein and the Torch landings in North Africa. But it's hard to see much changing in terms of what the Western Allies were doing – they were already shipping raw materials and munitions to the Soviet Union. It would have shifted the route: the Persian Corridor through Iran would have been forced to detour by the Nazi capture of Stalingrad, so more aid would have had to come through other routes.

Could a German victory at Stalingrad have changed the timing of the war, and even the outcome?

Certainly, winning at Stalingrad would have staved off German defeat for a time. The Soviet victory at Stalingrad not only destroyed the entire German Sixth Army, but it was followed by an offensive that liberated huge amounts of Soviet territory (and a young Mikhail Gorbachev, who lived for a time under German occupation) and forced the Germans to rapidly evacuate their troops pushing towards Baku. It gave renewed conviction to the Soviets and to the Western Allies that the Germans could indeed be beaten.

The question of changing the outcome of the war is much tougher. One of the aspects of the history of the war that is still quite mysterious is the extent of Nazi-Soviet discussions of a potential peace deal. There's reasonably good evidence that Stalin made some kind of approach to Hitler about a separate peace, though we know almost nothing about the details. If the Soviets had been defeated at Stalingrad, and if Soviet victory seemed distant or even impossible, then Stalin might have been willing to offer Hitler substantial concessions in terms of territory or resources in order to get out of the war. That would have allowed Hitler to focus exclusively on the Western Front. While this almost certainly wouldn't have been enough to enable him to defeat the United States and the United Kingdom, it might have been enough to drag the war out even longer and force the Western Allies to accept a peace of exhaustion, leaving Hitler in power in Germany with at least some of Germany's conquests. After all, Stalingrad took place a full year and a half before the Western Allies went ashore in Normandy – imagine what D-Day would have looked like with the bulk of the German military waiting in Western Europe. US Army Chief of Staff George Marshall said that he expected the American people would be willing to fight for four years before they would get tired of the war. As it was, the US only had to fight for three and a half.

ABOVE
Many of the prisoners of war would not survive their captivity

THE POSSIBILITY

1942

NON-AGGRESSION PART 2

It is possible Stalin may have looked to turn defeat into a victory of his own. Vital Nazi resources were being exhausted on the Eastern Front, but if that problem were to go away, by Stalin offering a peace deal and cessation of combat, those resources could be used more effectively in the West against the Allies. Hitler could possibly get the land he wanted for his Lebensraum (living space) for the German people, which had been at the heart of Operation Barbarossa. And Stalin would have the breathing space to rebuild the Soviet economy and armed forces in peace, ready for any possible future conflict with the West.

JUNE 1944

D FOR DISASTER DAY

Without the distraction and drain of conflict in the East, Nazi forces would have ample opportunity to strengthen, reinforce, and regroup in the West. With such a change in strength of Nazi defences, the timing and execution of the Allied invasion of Europe may have come under close scrutiny. It may be that more than one direct route back onto the Continent would be required, perhaps from the south, in order to gain a foothold. Potentially, larger numbers of Nazi forces would have made a beach invasion more of a gamble. And even once a foothold had been created, the sheer scale of Nazi defences could have drastically slowed, or stalled, the advance across Europe towards Berlin, leading to a possible stalemate.

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1945 ONWARDS

THE FOURTH REICH

With a greater depth of force between him and the invading Allies, Hitler's options may have been very different. Allied war fatigue and slow progress, plus a quiet and unpredictable Soviet Union, may have played into Hitler's hands to broker a form of peace. Germany remains intact, with him as leader and buffer between capitalist West and Communist East. So, no race to Berlin between the Soviets and the West; no East and West Berlin, no East Germany; and a very different look to the plans for a closer post-war European union.

What if...

ENGLAND HAD REMAINED A REPUBLIC?

With no ruling monarchy and no Christmas, what would a continuing republic have looked like?

INTERVIEW WITH

John Morrill

Professor John Morrill is an expert on the English Civil War and the Interregnum. He taught at Trinity College, Oxford and is the author of *Oliver Cromwell: The Brave, Bad Man Of British History* due for publication in October.

Following the Roundhead victory at the end of the English Civil War, King Charles I of England was executed. Oliver Cromwell, the leader of the new republic, took charge but refused the crown himself. For the next 11 years, in a period known as the Interregnum, Cromwell and Parliament ruled over a now strictly puritan nation. Festivals such as Christmas and Easter were banned and theatres were closed. But following Cromwell's death and the lacklustre reception of his successor, Charles II returned to England and the monarchy was restored. However, is it possible that if a different successor was chosen, the English republic could have continued?

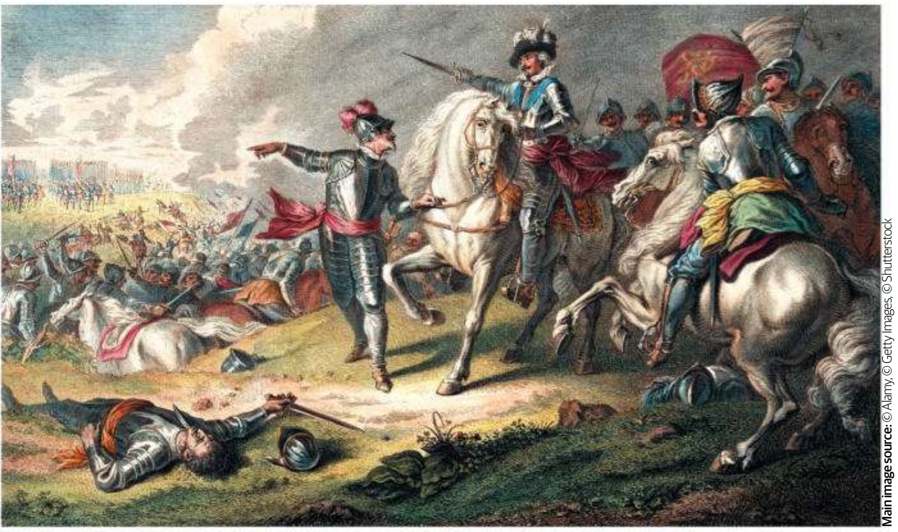
What was the situation in England upon the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658?

Complicated. On the one hand the nation was secure and there was no realistic prospect of any uprisings attempting to overthrow the regime. Over the previous years all Royalist opposition had been disarmed and dispirited. There's a Presbyterian who says of Cromwell that "I Will not oppose him, but he deserves to be hanged for a fool If he thinks that I will help him if once he stumbles". In other words, he's achieved acquiescence but he lacks popular support. I think it's important to remember that we are not only talking about England but Scotland, Wales and Ireland too. The regime is secure, but only because it's got a very large military establishment and very tight military control. For example, there is a significant series of garrisons in Scotland, and they're important not only for intimidating the population and reminding them that there's no point in rebelling, but also because the military officers stationed there act as magistrates and local governors. So it's a highly militarised regime. In Ireland 40 per cent of all land was transferred from Irish Catholics to English Protestants and 40,000 Catholic soldiers deported, but the problem is that he's running out of money. The large funds needed to support the military establishment always outstripped even the very high levels of taxation that were in place.

Initially, that problem was resolved by selling the land of cathedrals, the bishops, the crown and 800 'malignant' royalists. Eventually, they ran out of land to sell and were forced to use credit. Interest rates went up and Cromwell had already alienated the main money men in London – he'd not honoured his promises to prioritise them in the redistribution of land in Ireland. However, Cromwell was aware that if he cuts back on the army and significantly reduces the military presence then it's possible there might be unrest, particularly in Scotland and Ireland. So things are not entirely secure.

So how much of the eventual collapse of the republic is due to Richard Cromwell's effectiveness as a leader?

A number of historians have made attempts to rehabilitate Richard Cromwell. For example Jason Peacey, a very good historian, believes that he was really nowhere near as bad a leader as he was made out to be. Personally, I'm not so sure. One problem regarding Richard's succession is that Oliver Cromwell, under the constitution of 1657, was required to nominate his own successor. There wasn't any other mechanism through which



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RIGHT
The brutal English civil wars saw King Charles I executed and Britain plunged into a Puritan Republic

Main image source: © Alamy, © Getty Images, © Shutterstock

Deal with it

THE PAST

1660

THE RESTORATION

Following Richard's disastrous rule he was forced to flee. Parliament would eventually choose to restore the monarchy and Charles II was invited back to once again rule over his former kingdoms. In a ceremony on 23 April 1661 he was crowned, the delay partly being due to the fact that a new crown had to be made as the previous one had been melted during the years of the republic. His reign was a troubled one, thanks to outbreaks of plague, the disaster of the Great Fire of London and defeat in the Second Anglo-Dutch War.

1660 – 1710

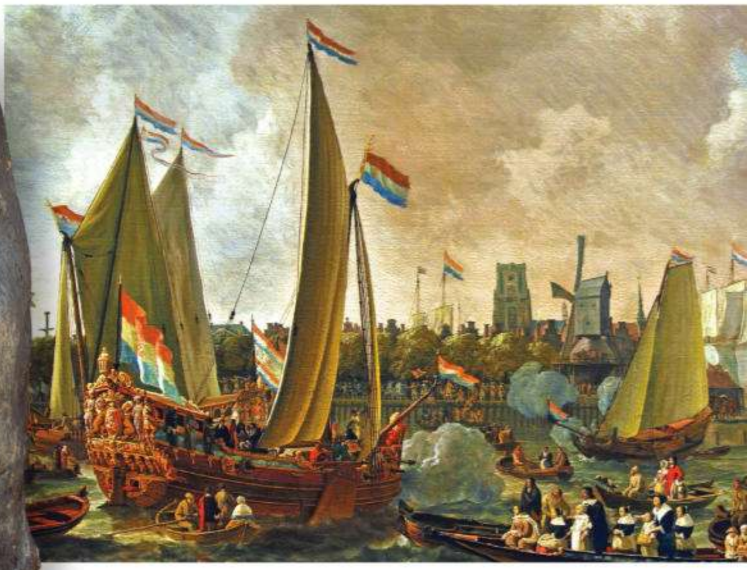
RESTORATION COMEDY

By order of Parliament, on 6 September 1642, London's theatres were closed and would remain so for the next 18 years. Under Cromwell, this form of entertainment was seen as 'ungodly' and so was banned. However, upon Charles II's return theatre once again flourished. In particular, comedy proved extremely popular. 'Comedy of Manners', as the style of this period became known, was a form that poked fun at the behaviours and societal norms of the day. Many restoration comedies are still performed to this day.

1688 – 1689

GLORIOUS REVOLUTION

Following the death of Charles II, his brother, James II, became king. James quickly proved himself to be an unpopular ruler and pushed England to the brink of another civil war. William of Orange and his wife Mary arrived in England with an army and James was removed from the throne. Their reign saw more limits placed on the power of the monarchy and greater rights given to parliament.

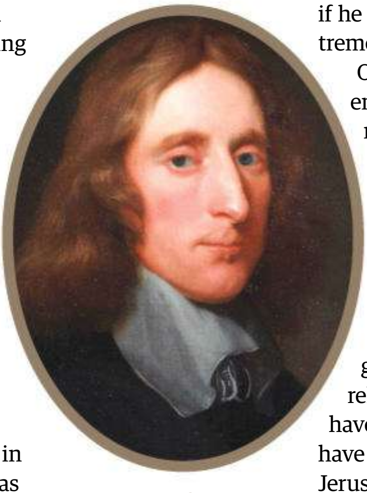


ABOVE-LEFT
The death mask of Oliver Cromwell. At the end of his rule the republic was in financial difficulties

ABOVE-RIGHT
During his return to England, Charles II stopped in Rotterdam. If the republic had not fallen, would the monarchy have remained in exile?

someone could legitimately take charge. On the day before his death, Cromwell is said to have been delirious and murmured Richard's name to an appreciative audience – but of course if he hadn't they'd be in a real pickle! But there's also quite a strong possibility that Cromwell had written a nomination and given it to his secretary of state John Thurloe, who was a master of steaming out sealed documents. WH Dawson in the 1930s argued that Cromwell had actually nominated John Lambert but the council suppressed this and claimed he nominated Richard instead. So there's added complications to Richard's succession.

How was he as a leader? He lacked charisma but also a clear vision. That's pretty fatal when he's surrounded by powerful people who do have visions but they clash with one another. It's possible he was put in because everyone thought that he was weak and that they could control him. He seems to have been paralysed into inactivity, all the while the financial situation continues to deteriorate and army unrest continues to grow.

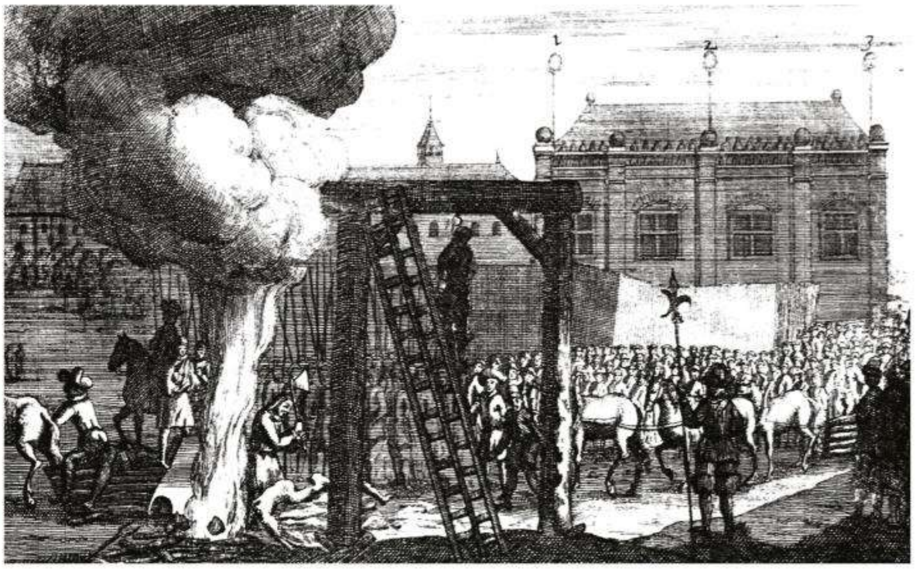


ABOVE
Oliver Cromwell's son, Richard, who lacked the vision and charisma to be a successful ruler

Could Cromwell's son in law, Henry Ireton, or John Lambert have made effective leaders?
Years earlier Henry Ireton might have seemed the obvious successor but I've often thought that, prior to his death, there had been a pretty catastrophic falling out between him and Cromwell. Although there had been a close bond between them, towards the end of Cromwell's time in Ireland he seems to be really demoting Ireton. What the latter could have brought is a very clear legal mind. He was less fiercely puritan than Cromwell and most likely would have been very concerned with getting a written constitution that really worked. In Ireland he likely would have been very hardline and interested in dispossessing the remaining Catholic population. But I'm not entirely sure that if he had survived he would have been a tremendously attractive alternative.

On the other hand, if there was an envelope containing John Lambert's name, then that's a more intriguing possibility. Let's assume that Lambert was in fact Cromwell's nominee. What would that mean? Lambert came from solid Yorkshire gentry stock, more solid than Cromwell and so he would have been an attractive figure for the gentry. He's committed to a broad religious settlement, but he doesn't have Cromwell's zeal and doesn't have Cromwell's desire to build a new Jerusalem. He also has an unblemished military record and had been a highly successful general in the north and then in Scotland. He is much more considered and moderate than anyone else and there is a possibility that he could have been successful. But how he would have solved the financial difficulties, I don't know.

So if the republic had continued, what could it have looked like?
The most obvious thing is it wouldn't have been Anglican, there would still have been a broad national church based on

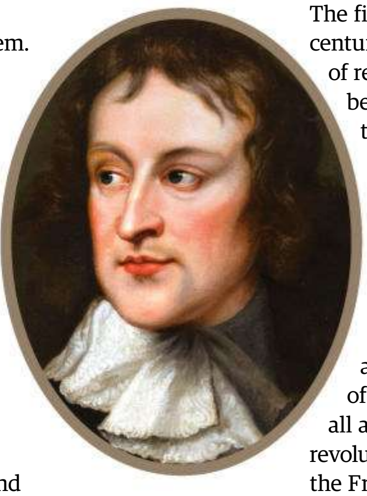


puritan principles together with a very broad toleration for others. The second thing is that I think the configuration of England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales would have remained very different. Under the protectorate, there was a single parliament for the whole of these islands for the only time before 1801. There would not have been the restoration of Irish and Scottish Parliaments as there was in 1660 and there would not have been a large degree of devolution with executive functions and judicial functions. Most likely, it would have been a very colonial system. With Englishmen, acting as chief executives and boards in Scotland. I think the process of colonisation and acculturation in Scotland and Ireland would have been a major, long-term difference.

Would it have remained strictly Puritan? In particular, could you see festivals such as Christmas returning?

To an extent they already were. Despite Puritan attempts, aspects of traditional Anglican religious culture were creeping back, particularly around festivals like Christmas. In fact, there were still Christmas festivities in a large number of churches. For example, the Puritans had tried to replace the old Anglican system, in which people took communion only at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, with monthly communion services. But in most parish churches it's quite clear they are still celebrating communion at Christmas and Easter. They may be using some more puritanical forms, but they are remembering these are the great festivals. So there are lots of people who are using the Book of Common Prayer for baptisms, weddings, funerals, and accommodating semi-Puritan forms of festivals such as Christmas. So it is possible we would have seen a new form of the Sacraments, still not fundamentally Anglican, but with these ideas creeping back.

ABOVE Following the collapse of the republic, the bodies of Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton and John Bradshaw were posthumously executed



ABOVE Was General John Lambert chosen as Cromwell's actual successor?

What do you think could be some implications for today?

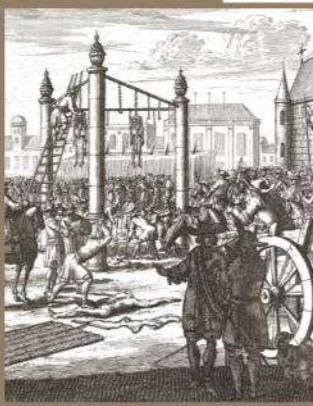
It's almost impossible to say. However, I do think there are two societal impacts that we can trace back to the Interregnum. The first is that in England, since the 17th century, there has been a deep suspicion of religious fanaticism. There hasn't ever been the kind of religious extremism that you find in the history of most European countries. Indeed, I think there's a fear of fanaticism in general. You can even take this further as Britain was probably the least affected by the totalitarian movements of the 1930s and 1940s. There is a kind of societal fear of a return to a rather false memory of what the mid 17th century was all about. You see this in the lack of revolutionary fervour in Britain during the French Revolution and the decades afterwards. The second is that there has never been any move in Britain back to having military heroes as political leaders. Wellington is a partial exception, but he becomes prime minister 15 years after Waterloo and he's more of a figurehead. There's a suspicion that you don't want military leaders with strong support in the armed forces, as political leaders. However, if you look around the world, you'll find that pretty unusual. If England had remained a republic, it's impossible to say whether this suspicion of religious fanaticism or the lack of military heroes as political leaders would have occurred.

THE POSSIBILITY

1660

OLIVER CROMWELL – HERO?

In the autumn of 1660, the bodies of Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton and John Bradshaw were removed from their graves at the orders of Charles II. The bodies were taken to the gallows at Tyburn where they hung from chains before being beheaded. For the next 25 years, the heads were placed on a large spike outside Westminster Hall. However, one night a storm dislodged Cromwell's head. For centuries the head passed through various hands, even appearing in a touring 'freak show' before being buried at Sidney Sussex College in the 20th century. Had the republic continued it's highly doubtful he would have received such treatment and may have been treated as a national hero.



1706 – 1707

A SCOTTISH COLONY?

The Treaty of Union and the Acts of Union, passed in 1706 and 1707 overseen by Queen Anne, resulted in the creation of Great Britain and united England and Scotland. However, as John Morrill suggests, had a republic continued it is likely that these acts would never have occurred. Instead, England may have taken a more colonial approach to rule in Scotland.

2023

NO MORE MONARCHY?

Since Charles II was restored to the throne, there have been 16 subsequent monarchs. The current king, Charles III was crowned on 6 May 2023. However, if the republic had continued, what position would the monarchy be in? Would they have died out in exile? Or would there have been further civil wars as they sought to regain the throne?

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What if...

THE USSR HAD INVENTED THE ATOMIC BOMB FIRST?

A Soviet victory in the race for the atomic bomb could have meant a very different Cold War...

© Headshot image: Stanford University

INTERVIEW WITH

David J HollowaY

David J Holloway is professor emeritus at Stanford University and the author of *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-1956* (1994) and the essay *Nuclear Weapons and the Cold War in Europe* (2013).

When physicists Lise Meitner and Otto Frisch discovered nuclear fission in December 1938, the possibility of an atomic weapon became a frightening reality. Scientists from several countries began work, seeking to produce such a device. However, after being invaded by Nazi Germany in 1941, the Soviet Union chose instead to focus efforts on repelling the enemy. Meanwhile, in the United States, the Manhattan Project saw a team of experts led by Robert J Oppenheimer devote vast resources to ensuring America were the leaders in the race. In 1945, Oppenheimer was ultimately victorious, but what if the bomb had fallen first into the hands of the Soviet Union? Would the weapon have been detonated not over Hiroshima, but Berlin? Would we still have had the Cold War?

What exactly was the Soviet atomic project and how did it fit into the wider race for the bomb taking place during the 1940s?

When nuclear fission was discovered at the end of 1938, Soviet scientists were as excited about the discovery as physicists in other countries. They did work on investigating the possibility of a nuclear fission chain reaction, as either a power reactor or an explosive reaction – a bomb. But in June of 1941, when the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, the work was ended. There were much more immediate tasks at hand because the German armies advanced rapidly and were quickly able to threaten Moscow. Despite this, the Soviet Union did learn about the work going on, initially in Britain and then in the United States, through their intelligence service. Perhaps most importantly they were able to obtain a copy of the MAUD report, which was a classified report investigating the possibility of using uranium to construct a bomb. One of the famous Cambridge Five spies transmitted the report to Moscow in October of 1941, at almost exactly the same time it was being briefed to President Roosevelt in Washington DC. So the Soviet Union was on a par with the US in terms of scientific knowledge regarding an atomic weapon. However, while the report helped to speed up the Manhattan Project it was largely ignored by the Soviet Union. Lavrentiy Beria, who was head of Soviet intelligence, feared that it was a scam designed to distract them. Additionally, the prospect of a bomb in two or three years, which is essentially what the MAUD report stated, didn't seem very interesting when you're desperately trying to defend Moscow against the German attack. However, when intelligence came to Moscow about German work on a potential bomb, Stalin signed the decree setting up a small experimental project of their own.

How much more advanced was the Manhattan Project?

The thing to remember is that although the US entered the war in December 1941, it was not subject to invasion or to bombing in the way the Soviet Union was. By that point the German armies had Leningrad under siege and were even threatening Moscow. Indeed, when Stalin signed the decree setting up the relatively small project it was just as the Battle for Stalingrad was beginning. The scientist who was put in charge, Igor Kurchatov, had to assemble his group at a time when the country was fighting to defend itself. Meanwhile Roosevelt has given authorisation to turn the American research on the bomb into an industrial project. I think we forget that the Manhattan Project employed maybe 120,000 people. So that's the key difference. What you see in the Soviet Union is a pre-industrial project on the bomb, which is constantly receiving espionage concerning the Manhattan Project. The scientists involved were very conscious that they were lagging behind.

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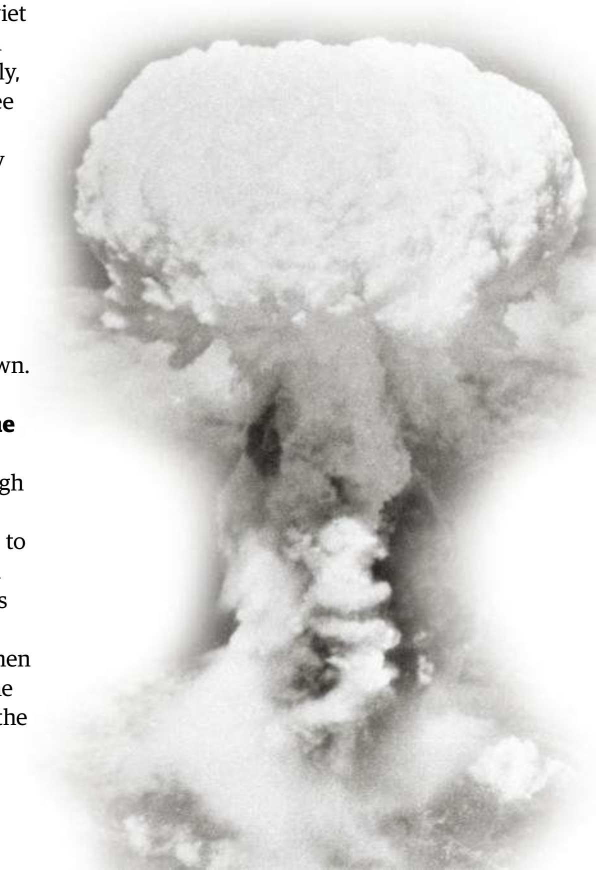


RIGHT
Mushroom cloud over Nagasaki

THE PAST

1945

J ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

J Robert Oppenheimer was a gifted physicist, chosen as the scientific director of the American attempt to create an atomic weapon, the Manhattan Project. It was during the war that Oppenheimer became interested in the possibility of nuclear bombs, concerned that Nazi Germany may possibly have already been creating such a weapon. Oppenheimer chose Los Alamos as the site for the project and on 16 July 1945, tested 'Trinity', their first atomic weapon. Oppenheimer was opposed to the bombing of Nagasaki and later, after the war, at the development of the more powerful hydrogen bomb. He was targeted during the 'Red Scare' for supposedly having communist sympathies.

1943

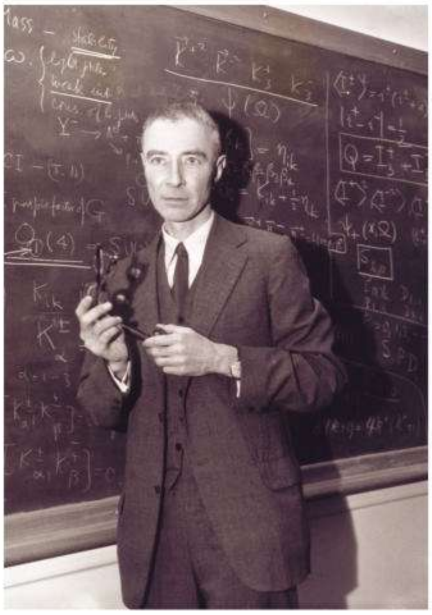
KLAUS FUCHS

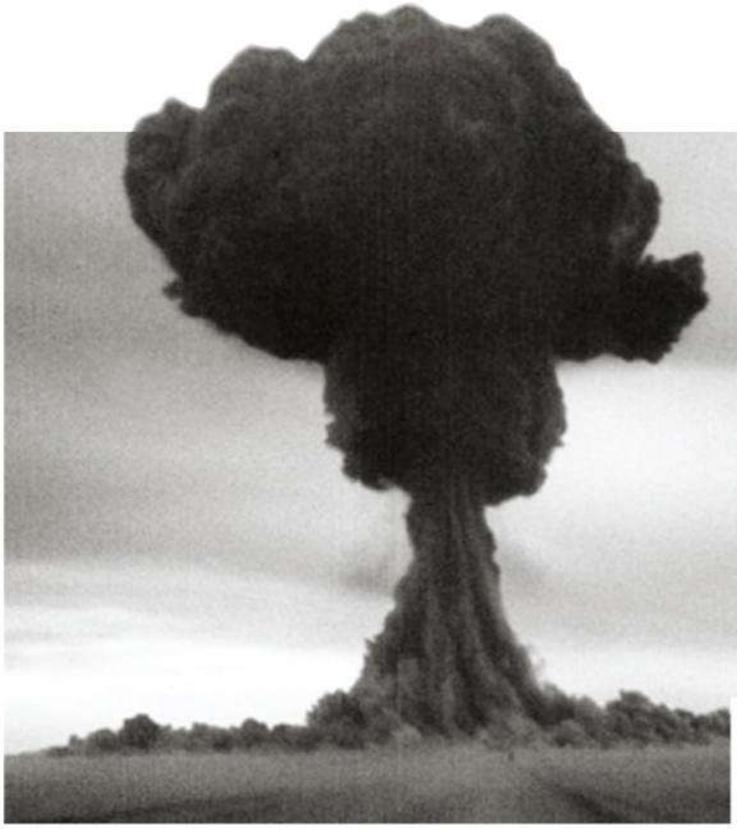
Klaus Fuchs was a scientist who in 1943, joined the Manhattan Project. However, Fuchs was also a spy who provided information to the Soviet Union on the development of the American atomic project. He was discovered in 1949 when the United States and Great Britain cracked the famous VENONA codes, used by Soviet spies. Fuchs would be sentenced for 14 years and would then move to East Germany, passing away in 1988. The importance of the information supplied by Fuchs to the Soviet atomic project remains a source of debate. However some argue that his information helped to save the Soviet project precious time.

1943

IGOR KURCHATOV

Igor Kuchatov was the director of the Soviet nuclear programme. Kurchatov was known for wearing a large beard, which he stated would not be cut until the programme succeeded. Kurchatov would later pursue the peaceful use of nuclear technology, becoming fearful of the potential use of atomic weapons. Aware of his own responsibility, he sought to argue against further testing. Despite the success of the Soviet nuclear project, he continued to wear his beard for the remainder of his life.





ABOVE - LEFT
J Robert Oppenheimer, the 'father of the atomic bomb' – would Kurchatov have been given this title instead?

ABOVE - RIGHT
The first successful Soviet atomic test, known as 'first lightning'

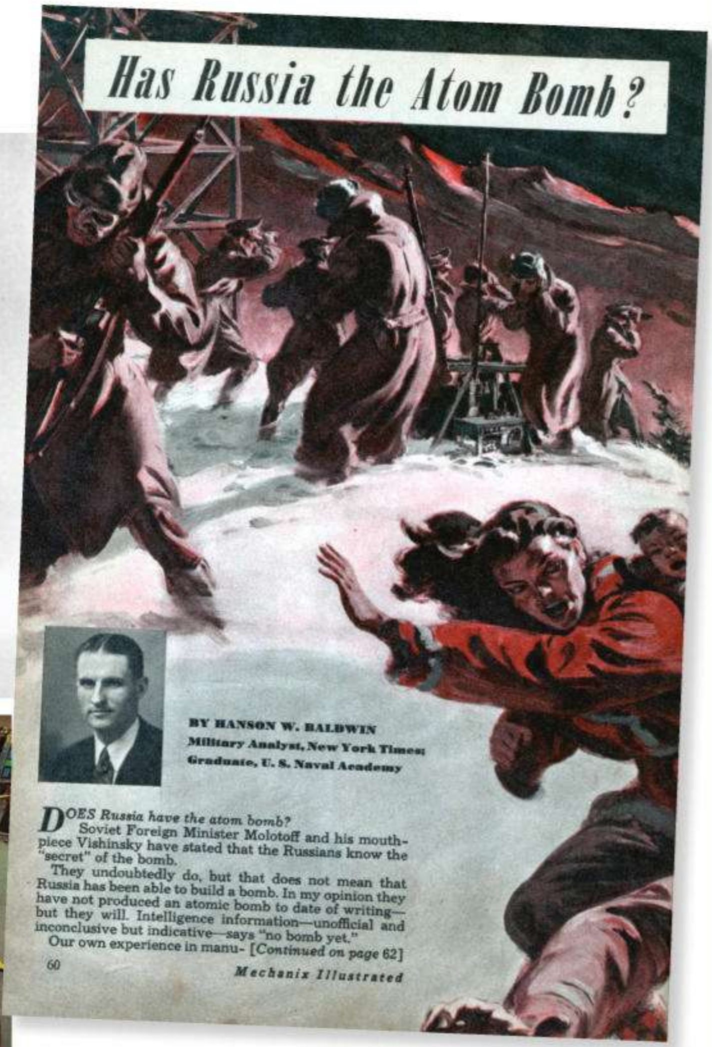
So it's likely that it would never have been possible for Kurchatov's group to have overtaken the Manhattan Project any time?
No, I don't think it would have been possible. Just given the conditions of the war. Even if they had decided, let's say before the German attack, to set up the atomic industry to produce the bomb, I doubt it would have been able to survive the subsequent Nazi attack. Due to the timescale, I think the question would be 'we're fighting for our lives, how can we be concerned about a bomb that might appear in two or three years?'

What was the Soviet Union's reaction to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings?
The Soviet Union had very detailed intelligence about the Manhattan Project, but they appear not to have had any intelligence about the plan to use the bomb against Japan. It was a shock for Moscow and a couple of weeks after the bombing of Hiroshima, on 22 August 1945, Stalin signed a decree turning the small but growing Soviet nuclear project into a crash programme to develop the bomb as quickly as possible. They had actually received information about the design of the plutonium bomb, the type dropped on Nagasaki, and it was that design they decided to copy. And so the first Soviet test, which was in August 1949, was actually a copy of the Nagasaki bomb.

What would it have taken for the Soviets to develop the bomb first?
First of all, it would have taken a decision to invest in a very large industrial project to develop the bomb. Additionally, this decision would have to be taken before the summer of 1942, when the United States chose to go ahead with their project and would have had to disregard any cost. Even for the US, that was a major decision taken largely on advice from scientists that not only would this be possible but that maybe the Germans were already building one. In the Soviet Union, there wasn't that great trust between the leadership and the scientists.

The second thing is that, even if they had made that decision, the war would still have changed everything. During the German attack all resources were devoted to the Soviet Union's defence. When Kurchatov was trying to set up his small laboratory, he could hardly get anyone to pay attention to him because everyone was under enormous pressure to fulfil different tasks for weapons production. He even writes a letter complaining about this to Beria.

If the Soviet Union had developed the bomb first, would it have been detonated during the war? Possibly over Germany?
It's certainly possible. The fighting to seize Berlin was ferocious and went on until May 1945 and the use of the bomb might have been regarded as 'helpful' in ending the war. For Britain, strategic bombing was an extremely important part of the way the war was fought, especially after Dunkirk and the British were out of the European continent. But that was not the case with the Soviet



Has Russia the Atom Bomb?

BY HANSON W. BALDWIN
Military Analyst, New York Times;
Graduate, U. S. Naval Academy

DOES *Russia have the atom bomb?*

Soviet Foreign Minister Molotoff and his mouthpiece Vishinsky have stated that the Russians know the "secret" of the bomb.

They undoubtedly do, but that does not mean that Russia has been able to build a bomb. In my opinion they have not produced an atomic bomb to date of writing—but they will. Intelligence information—unofficial and inconclusive but indicative—says "no bomb yet."

Our own experience in manu- [*Continued on page 62*]

60 *Mechanix Illustrated*

LEFT
A nuclear staffer cleans the first Soviet nuclear bomb, tested in 1949

ABOVE
An article from 1948 demonstrating the fear that the Soviet Union could possibly develop an atomic weapon

Union. The Soviet strategic bombing didn't really play a serious role in their attack on Germany. Their air force was used more in a tactical role to support land forces. However, one could still argue that at the very end of the war, they could have put a bomb on a plane to destroy specific German cities. And that would certainly have been conceivable.

Do you think ultimately we still would have ended up with a Cold War?

Yes, I think so. Because there was still the kind of fundamental ideological difference between the Soviet Union and the United States. The Soviet Union did see victory in the war as another step in the progress towards communism. However, I think the Cold War would have been different because the American monopoly on the bomb or the great lead it had from 1949, made it much easier for the US to make the commitment it did to the post-war defence of Europe. When Eisenhower decided European powers couldn't afford politically or economically to reach the troop levels NATO required, there was always the option to send nuclear weapons to Europe. But I think the fact of the American monopoly initially, and then its superiority in the number of weapons, made certain decisions easier for the US than they would otherwise have been. And so the Cold War could have taken a different shape.

Do you think then we would be feeling the effects now or do you think we'd still be very much in the same world?

I mean, ultimately it would not have made much of a difference because we still would have had two sides with nuclear weapons. The US would still have built up its nuclear forces, after all, it was economically and technologically more powerful than the Soviet Union. Its economy had not been damaged in the same way the Soviet economy was subjected to huge destruction during the war. So I think we still would have got to a point of probably strategic parity and mutual assured destruction, and then it would have been a rivalry of which system was better. So ultimately I don't think that the Soviet Union having more weapons initially would have made that much difference to the eventual outcome.

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THE POSSIBILITY

1938

THE NAZI ATOMIC PROJECT

While the Soviet Union most likely could not have developed an atomic weapon before the US, one possibility is that the Nazi project may have been successful before either of them. Nuclear fission was discovered in Berlin in 1938, creating panic in America that the Nazis were on their way to weaponising this discovery. Kurt Diebner was in charge of the project but several scientific miscalculations meant the project lagged behind its American counterpart. The Nazi project relied on expensive heavy water and when the key plant producing this material was destroyed, the project lagged even further behind.

1945

HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

On 6 and 9 August 1945, the United States detonated two atomic bombs over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing thousands. The next day the Japanese government agreed to a surrender. The decision by President Truman to use atomic weapons, not once but twice, remains a controversial and divisive one. However, if the Soviet Union had been able to develop an atomic weapon first, during World War II, would we have seen the devastating weapons detonated over Europe?

1948-49

NUCLEAR MONOPOLY

The United States' monopoly on nuclear weapons after the end of WWII meant it could rely on the nuclear threat to help defend Europe. Indeed, during the Berlin blockade of 1948-49, a number of B-29 bombers were transferred to the area to demonstrate the willingness of the United States to use nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union if necessary. However, although David J Holloway suggests the US would always have been able to develop the number of weapons necessary for a monopoly, would they have been able to secure this hold on Europe?

What if...

THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS HAD LOST?

The communist takeover of China in 1949 helped shape the Cold War and the modern world, but what if they'd lost?

INTERVIEW WITH

© Elizabeth J Perry

Elizabeth J Perry

Elizabeth J Perry is the Henry Rosovsky Professor of Government at Harvard University. Among her works are *Mao's Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations Of Adaptive Government In China* and her forthcoming co-edited volume *Ruling By Other Means: State-Mobilized Movements.*

What was the situation in China leading up to the communist takeover in 1949?

China, on the eve of the communist takeover, was in terrible shape. The ruling KMT [Nationalist Party] government had descended into corruption on many levels and there was galloping inflation. China, of course, had been very hard hit by the Japanese invasion that began in the late-1930s. That had ended only in 1945 and so it was still a war-torn country, impoverished, with tremendous inequality, political disorder and poor public health. There was a great deal of unhappiness on the part of many different sectors of the population with respect to the KMT regime. Initially, when the nationalists unified China in 1927-1928, there was considerable hope that they would really usher in a kind of new age for China. However, after the Japanese invasion more and more people, including the intelligentsia, as well as the peasantry, went over to the communist side, for patriotic as well as pragmatic reasons. There was a realization that the Nationalists were not fighting the Japanese or managing the economy effectively, and that the country was in danger of permanently losing its sovereignty.

Who was Mao Zedong and the CCP?

Mao came from Hunan Province in the heartland of China and was born in what he later characterised as a rich peasant family. He was educated primarily in a traditional Chinese way with Chinese classics, which helps explain why he later became a very successful poet as well as an essayist. While working as a librarian at Peking University, he felt that he was looked down upon by the more elite Chinese intellectuals because he retained certain peasant-like traits. The primary co-founders of the Chinese Communist Party [CCP] were two other intellectuals active at Peking University at the same time. One was the director of the library, Li Dazhao, and the other was the dean, Chen Duxiu. Due in part to their invitation, Mao attended the founding of the party in 1921. His first assignment was to organise workers in his native Hunan Province, but he quickly realised that the peasantry more than the workers were going to have to be the main social force of revolution and he became the head of the peasant bureau. Mao was not recognised as the paramount leader of the Chinese Communist Party until the Long March that took the communists out of their Jiangxi Soviet base all the way up to the northwest to Yan'an in Shaanxi Province. It was during this period (1930s-1940s) that Mao began to articulate what we think of as Maoism – a distinctive recipe for revolution focused on peasant mobilisation and guerrilla warfare against an overwhelming enemy.

Who exactly were their main opponents, the KMT?

The KMT, also known as the Nationalists, trace their roots back to activists in the 1911 revolution that brought down China's last imperial dynasty. The KMT established its capital in Nanjing in 1927 after defeating warlords who ruled China at the time. By this point, the head of the KMT was Chiang Kai-shek. In cooperation with members of secret societies in the industrial city of Shanghai, he brutally attacked the communist labour movement there in the spring of 1927. This was an

Image sources: wiki/Flickr

Main image sources: wiki/The National Archives, 2x © Getty Images

RIGHT
A Chinese communist rally in 1932

THE PAST

1949

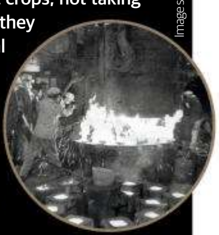
COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

Following four years of civil war in China, the CCP took control. After the CCP's formation in 1921, the massacre of many of its members by the nationalists in 1927 and years of tenuous partnerships with those same groups, the nationalists were forced to flee. Following this there were numerous executions as Mao asserted his authority.

1958-1960

THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

A campaign launched in 1958 by Mao to bring industry to the countryside, which included, among other things, 'backyard furnaces' to help steel output. Misguided policies such as 'sparrowcide' (massacring all sparrows to protect crops, not taking into account the insects they eat) and a desire by local officials to complete quotas (collecting 'surpluses' that did not exist) led to widespread famine.



1960

SINO-SOVIET SPLIT

Following the death of Stalin, Nikita Krushchev lead the Soviet Union. Due to tensions between himself and Chairman Mao, he withdrew all technical aid and support from China.

1966-1976

CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Following the Great Leap Forward, Mao stepped down from his position of power. However in 1966 he called on the youth to rebel against capitalist and traditionalist movements in society – while simultaneously removing his enemies from within the CCP. Numerous intellectuals were tortured and killed, with the figures ranging anywhere from hundreds of thousands to 20 million.

Image source: wiki/ Tsering Dorjee

Image source: wiki/ Li Jiuling

ABOVE KMT troops leaving Canton following defeat

important turning point in the history of Chinese communism, causing the communists to move out of the cities into the countryside. So the KMT were opponents, but also periodic allies of the Chinese communists, having jointly fought warlords in the 1920s and allying again during World War II to fight the Japanese. This second united front broke down toward the end of WWII, and after the Japanese withdrawal the communists engaged in civil war against the nationalists from 1945 to 1949.

How did the CCP finally gain control?
It was a two-fold process. On the one hand, the Communist Party was gaining more and more territory in the countryside. The Long March had begun as a defeat. However, after the Japanese invaded, the communists began to develop a successful guerrilla warfare strategy and gained increasingly more territory. At the same time the Japanese invasion helped to unravel the KMT. Corruption was rife in the KMT during World War II. Funds that were supposed to go toward fighting actually went into the pockets of various KMT leaders. By the end of World War II, the tables had turned and the communists gained the upper hand. The communists were able to gain control because of the implosion of the KMT, which proved unable to control the economy and unite the different warring factions within the Nationalist Party. The Battle of Huaihai in 1948 was a critical juncture, after which a number of soldiers defected from the KMT side and went over to the communist side.

What were some of the immediate effects of the communist takeover?
The communists carried out dramatic changes in the cities and countryside: land reform in the villages, socialisation of industry in the factories, thought reform in the universities. These were conducted as mass campaigns in which ordinary citizens were mobilized by the state to help implement its radical agenda. The campaigns were violent, with millions of landlords, rich peasants, KMT sympathisers, Japanese 'puppets', bandits, secret society members, sectarians, and other 'enemies of the people' killed. But inflation was brought under control and public order was largely restored through a series of draconian disciplinary measures. By the late 1950s, people were subject to a household registration system that severely limited mobility. Class labels were imposed to divide the population into 'good' classes like peasants and workers and 'bad' classes like landlords

> " Millions of landlords, rich peasants and other 'enemies of the people' were killed "

and rich peasants. It was a very, very different society from what China had looked like before the revolution.

Were there any points when the communists could have failed?
Before the outbreak of World War II, very few people would have expected a communist takeover in China. Had Chiang Kai-shek managed to tame the factional struggles within the KMT or to curb the rampant inflation and corruption, things could have gone very differently. Had the Japanese not invaded, it would surely have been a very different timetable if not an entirely different outcome. There was nothing preordained about the victory of the communist revolution, from 1921 when the CCP was founded until 1949 when it took over the mainland.

What could some of the effects for China have been had the communists been defeated?
Had the KMT managed to eliminate the communist threat during the civil war you might have seen a somewhat less coercive government, simply by virtue of the fact it was less powerful than the communists. But my guess is what would have happened is China would have limped along for a very substantial period of time. We can look at Taiwan and say, "Oh well, because Chiang Kai-shek set up a very successful regime he would have done the same on the mainland," but I think that's a very implausible comparison. Much of the reason the KMT was able to reform itself on Taiwan was precisely because it had just suffered such a disastrous defeat and had to reconsider everything. Had the KMT remained in power on the mainland, there would surely have been a lot of loss of life through neglect, disease, poverty, political disorder and so forth. However, you would likely not have seen the executions nor a famine of the sort that occurred under Mao during the Great Leap Forward. When Mao broke with the Soviet Union and tried to apply his own guerrilla tactics to develop the countryside, China experienced the worst famine in all of history, with tens of millions dying of starvation. But you would probably have seen the continuation for many years of all of those problems that had existed before the communist revolution.

ABOVE Mao Zedong declaring the birth of communist China

BELOW Leader of the KMT, Chiang Kai-shek

3x © Getty Images

What could some of the effects have been globally had the communists not succeeded?
Had the communists not won, the Soviet Union would not have been China's closest ally in the 1950s. The Cold War would obviously have been very different had the US and China remained allies. But surely the Soviets would have aided remnant communists and other would-be revolutionaries seeking to take advantage of KMT weakness. So it's hard to imagine that a communist loss in the civil war with the KMT would have ushered in a peaceful or stable situation.

THE POSSIBILITY

1949-1975

CHIANG KAI-SHEK AND TAIWAN

The leader of the KMT, Chiang Kai-shek immediately moved the government to Taiwan where he resumed his duties as President of the Republic of China. He consistently claimed sovereignty over all of China, as well as making preparations to retake the mainland. Kai-shek would finance insurgent groups and plan a full-scale invasion in 1962. While ruling Taiwan, he purged the party of what he saw as corrupt elements. In the 1950s American aid and a land-reform act led to the island becoming economically prosperous. This has led historians to wonder what the possible changes Kai-shek would have instigated had he been able to once again seize control of the mainland.

Image source: wiki/ Tayvanlı Asker ve Siyasetçi

1949-1997

HONG KONG

Until 1997, Hong Kong remained under the rule of the British. Large numbers of refugees from China fled from the mainland during the initial communist takeover in 1949 and further numbers fled following the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution. Hong Kong's history is intertwined with its British rule – had the KMT been able to win the civil war, it is possible it would have been returned to Chinese rule earlier.

1950s & 1960s

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USA DURING THE COLD WAR

Chinese relations with the USA throughout the period of the Cold War were initially tense, having a much closer bond with the Soviet Union. The Korean War, Taiwan Strait Crisis, Vietnam War and Chinese atomic tests were just some of the events which led to a steady escalating of tensions throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Although relations improved in the 1970s, due in part to the Sino-Soviet Split, these earlier aggressions greatly affected the nature of the Cold War, particularly when China too became a nuclear power. Had the US allied more closely with a capitalist China, it is likely that the Cold War could have taken a vastly different path.

What if...

FREDERICK III OF GERMANY HAD SURVIVED?

He was a respected military hero and liberal visionary, so did a different future for Germany and Europe die with him?

INTERVIEW WITH

Photo courtesy of Christina Croft

Christina Croft

Christina is the author of 15 books about World War I and 19th century royalty, including *The Silent Emperor – German Emperor Frederick III* and *The Innocence of Kaiser Wilhelm II.*

In the procession to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887 he had cut a gallant and dashing figure in his gleaming guard's uniform. But the future for German Emperor Frederick III, husband to the queen's eldest daughter, was to be a short and tragic affair. He had waited so long for his chance to mould his vision of a better, unified and more liberal future for his nation through his compassion, dignity and loyalty. Tragically, illness would strike him down at the age of 56 and, quite literally, rob him of his voice and the potential to set the future of Germany – and Europe – on a very different course.

What unique skills and experience would Frederick III have brought to his reign and how would they have helped him?

On his accession [in March 1888], Frederick III had the advantage of an exemplary military record having played a major role in the Austro-Prussian and Franco-Prussian Wars. His courage and concern for his men had won him the support of the army, which was vital for any ruler; and his victory over the French enabled him to help bring about German unification, which could be seen as having given him the right to become German Emperor.

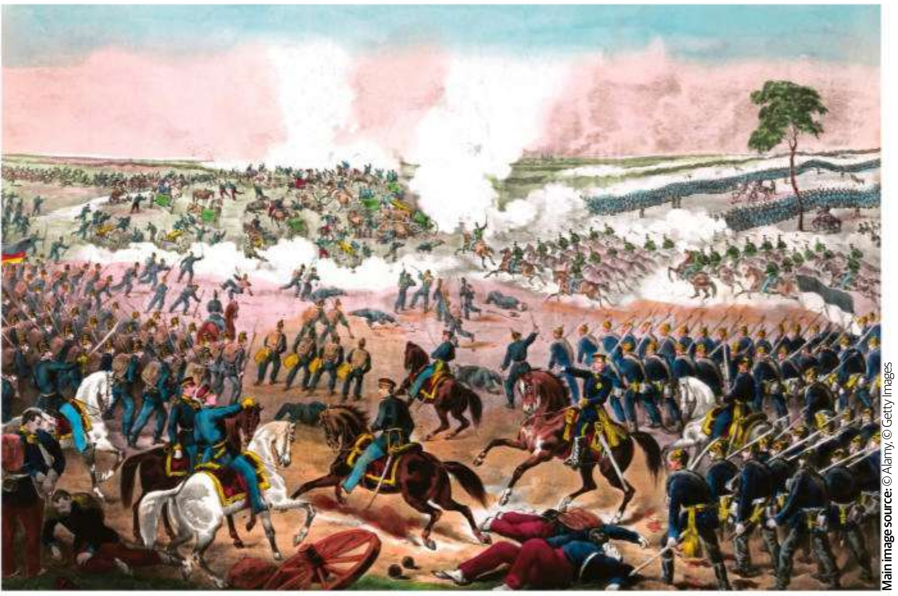
Since his early childhood, he had learned to listen to opposing views without expressing an opinion, which would be helpful in bringing together the opposing political factions within the German empire. His natural affability, which so endeared him to Queen Victoria, could also have facilitated easy conversation with foreign dignitaries, potentially leading to strong diplomatic ties with other European Powers.

Physically, he was blessed with the physique and features of an ideal Prussian king: 'A towering Lohengrin-like figure,' according to several contemporaries. 'An ideal prince among princes.' At a time when the emperor was seen as the embodiment of his country, his appearance would have made a powerful impression and won the loyalty of his people, and portrayed the newly unified Germany as a strong, potent new nation.

If he had reigned longer, how could he have taken on German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and won?

Although, as crown prince, Frederick resented Bismarck's deliberate attempts to exclude him from affairs of state, and the unscrupulous methods that he used to bring his draconian plans to fruition, he also recognised his political acumen, his diplomatic experience and his reputation as an effective statesman. In spite of their differences, there were also points of agreement: they were in accord about the necessity of the Schleswig-Holstein campaign and the Franco-Prussian War and, when the rulers of several German states, including Frederick's father, opposed the idea of a Prussian-led empire it was Bismarck to whom Frederick turned for help in hastening unification.

On his accession, Frederick asked the chancellor to remain in office and, according to Bismarck, relations between them became more harmonious. From the start, however, Frederick was



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RIGHT
Frederick III was a brave and talented leader in battle

That way,
TOWARDS
PEACE!

THE PAST

1864-71

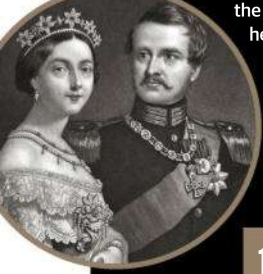
LEADERSHIP & COURAGE

Frederick was a successful, respected, talented and compassionate military leader for his country. He had his first taste of battle in the Second Schleswig War against Denmark in 1864. He was in action again in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and although reluctant to turn on former allies, loyalty to his country and its people prevailed. Following victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, a unified Germany was born. But during his lifetime recognition for Frederick's role in achieving such a pivotal moment in European history fell woefully short of what he deserved.

1858-88

SOULMATES

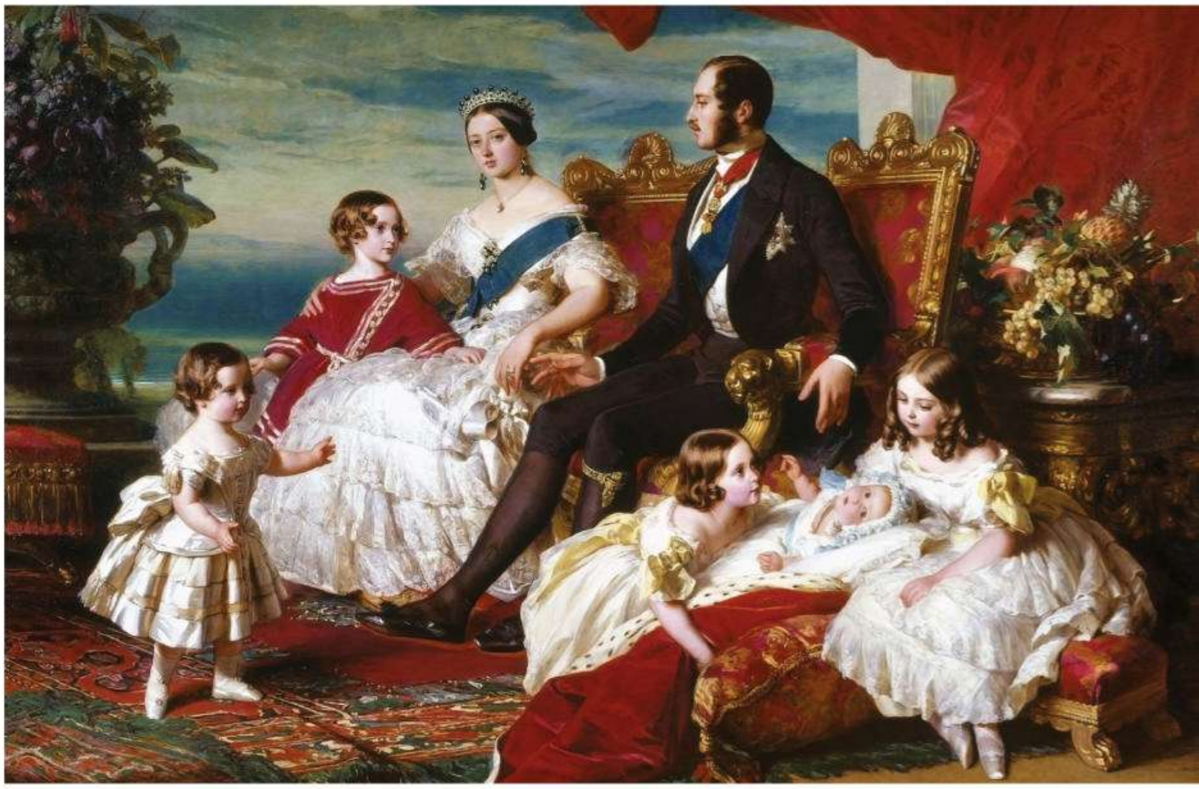
Frederick was a great admirer of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, as well as the British political system. A match was made with Vicky, the queen's eldest daughter, and their marriage proved to be one of true love and affection. They intended to rule as joint emperor and empress, but it was also a union of like-minded liberal thinkers. In a letter to her mother following Frederick's death, Vicky reaffirmed the strength of the bond with her late husband: "We loved Germany – we wished to see her strong and great, not only with the sword, but in all that was righteous, in culture, in progress and in liberty."



1871-88

THE LONG WAIT IN THE WINGS

Frederick had to wait patiently for his turn to rule. His father became the first emperor of a unified Germany in 1871. It was to be 17 years before Frederick was to take the title for himself, but by this time his health was failing him. A hoarseness of his voice quickly developed into cancer of the larynx. German and English doctors debated and diagnosed his condition with varying opinions and sometimes debatable treatments. Frederick remained stoic and dignified, but in the end lost his battle. He had ruled as emperor of Germany for just 99 days.



determined to stamp his own authority on domestic policy. He insisted on adhering to the tradition of releasing prisoners to mark a new reign; and demanded the removal of the reactionary Minister of the Interior Robert von Puttkamer, who had been responsible for many oppressive measures including prohibiting strikes and public meetings.

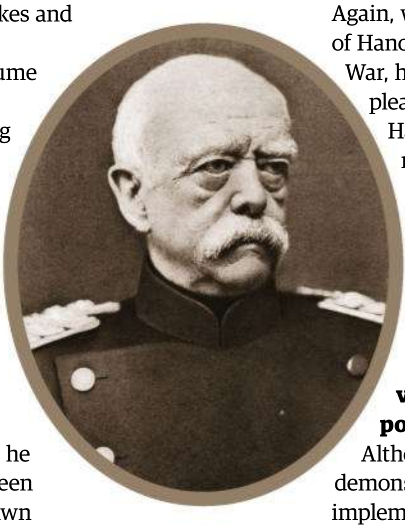
It is reasonable, therefore, to assume that Frederick would have allowed Bismarck to remain in office as long as he respected his own domestic policy, but would have dismissed him, as his successor did, if he tried to undermine him.

How important was the support of Frederick's wife and connections to the British royal family?

Frederick probably fell in love with the British royal family even before he fell in love with his future wife, Queen Victoria's eldest daughter Vicky. Drawn to the happy domesticity and mutual devotion of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, he developed a deep respect for Vicky's parents and they treated him as a son. His marriage was a love-match and his devotion to his wife and her family never waned.

Nonetheless, he separated his personal life from his role as a future king, and when British and Prussian policies clashed he was vehemently loyal to his homeland.

ABOVE Frederick admired the royal family of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, and the British political system



ABOVE Chancellor Otto von Bismarck was staunchly opposed to Frederick's liberal views

When there was a possibility that Britain would enter the Schleswig-Holstein War on the side of the Danes he remained committed to the campaign and, later, irked the fiercely pro-Danish prince of Wales by 'flaunting' the medals that he had won when Prussia defeated Denmark. Again, when Prussia seized the Kingdom of Hanover following the Austro-Prussian War, he ignored Queen Victoria's pleas on behalf of her cousin, the Hanoverian king. Vicky wrote to her mother on Frederick's behalf: "One must separate one's feelings for one's relations quite from one's judgement of political necessities, or one would be swayed to and from on all sides."

What impact would his liberal views have had on Germany, politically and socially?

Although the dismissal of Puttkamer demonstrated Frederick's intention of implementing more liberal domestic policies, it would be wrong to suppose that liberalism would characterise his reign. While he opposed Bismarck's oppressive regime, he was more inclined towards an autocracy than a constitutional monarchy. He shocked Prince Albert by urging his father to override his ministers' wishes regarding his coronation in order to demonstrate the authority of the Crown, which he believed had been undermined by concessions granted during the 1848 revolution. He was aghast when Queen Victoria permitted one of her daughters to marry a commoner, and even more so when another of Vicky's sisters married a Prince of Battenberg – the son of a former lady-in-waiting. "If I have any say in the matter," he raged, "I'll take good care that my Battenberg brother-in-law only appears in the court lists as Royal Highness of Great Britain. It is a scandal that the Queen has made him a Royal Highness."

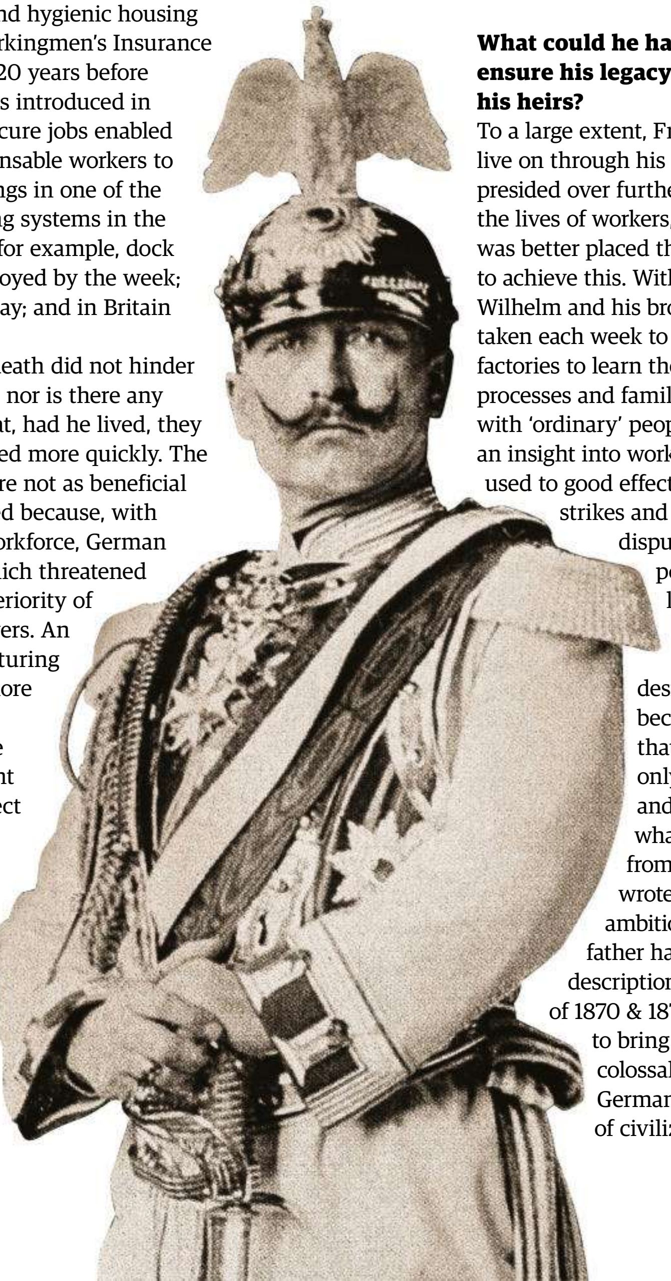
Liberals were often disappointed by his failure to speak on their behalf, and several contemporaries noted that he was perplexed by the demands of workers, with whom he never came into contact, and that his "liberal dream" meant ruling "with and for the bourgeoisie."

What impact would a more liberal Germany have had across Europe?

Within a few years of Frederick's death [on 15 June 1888], Germany was one of the most liberal countries in Europe, providing compensation schemes, pensions, sick pay and hygienic housing for workers. The Workingmen's Insurance Act was introduced 20 years before a similar scheme was introduced in Britain, and more secure jobs enabled even the most dispensable workers to begin to amass savings in one of the most flexible banking systems in the world. In Hamburg, for example, dock labourers were employed by the week; in Belgium, by the day; and in Britain only by the hour.

Frederick's early death did not hinder these improvements nor is there any reason to believe that, had he lived, they would have proceeded more quickly. The results, however, were not as beneficial as might be supposed because, with a more contented workforce, German industry thrived, which threatened the commercial superiority of other European powers. An increase in manufacturing created a need for more commercial outlets, which would require an effective merchant fleet, a navy to protect the seaways and ports or colonies to serve as fuelling stations. This led to tensions between Germany and her rivals, which would ultimately explode into the catastrophe of war.

BELOW
Frederick's heir Wilhelm II pushed through further reforms in Germany



Would there have been time to establish his vision for Germany?

Had Frederick lived beyond the end of the century he might have been able to establish better relations with Britain due to his personal relationship with his brother-in-law, Edward VII, which could have lessened the growing tensions between the two nations. But it is highly unlikely that he would have been willing to sacrifice German prosperity to ease the commercial rivalry between them. It is equally unlikely that he would've yielded the provinces of Alsace-Lorraine to create greater harmony with France, and it would have required a dramatic change of heart to overcome his antipathy towards Russia. His focus would probably have been on domestic policy – guaranteeing press and religious freedom, fair elections, and introducing reforms to improve the lives of workers. As many of these reforms were already underway it is feasible that he would've been successful in developing a prosperous and united empire.

What could he have done better to ensure his legacy lived on through his heirs?

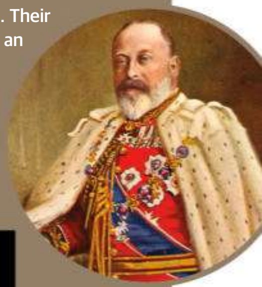
To a large extent, Frederick's legacy did live on through his heirs. Wilhelm II presided over further reforms to improve the lives of workers, and in many ways he was better placed than his father had been to achieve this. With Frederick's support, Wilhelm and his brother, Henry, had been taken each week to work in different factories to learn the manufacturing processes and familiarise themselves with 'ordinary' people. This gave Wilhelm an insight into workers' lives which he used to good effect when dealing with strikes and other industrial disputes. Contrary to popular opinion, based largely on wartime propaganda, Wilhelm II never had any desire for war, partly because he understood that the country could only prosper in peacetime, and partly because of what he had learned from his father. "Never," he wrote, "have I had warlike ambitions. In my youth my father had given me terrible descriptions of the battlefields of 1870 & 1871. I felt no inclination to bring such misery, on a colossally larger scale, on the German people and the whole of civilized mankind."

THE POSSIBILITY

1914

BLOODLINE NOT BLOODSHED

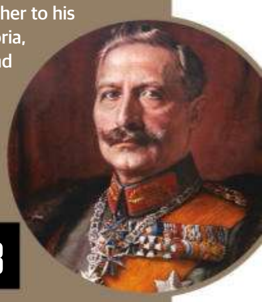
Frederick is reported to have told journalists: "I do not like war, gentlemen. If I should reign, I would never make it." If he had reigned for longer, perhaps it was his first-hand experience of war that may have seen him lead Germany in a more liberal, less offensive, stance. He would also perhaps have lived to see his brother-in-law Edward VII succeed Victoria. Their friendship may have helped an Anglo-German agreement very different from the jigsaw of alliances that were the major causes of war in 1914, and WWI may even have been avoided.



1888-?

NO MORE 'KAISER BILL'

With Frederick reigning for longer there may have been time for him to embed many more of his policies and plans. This may in turn have had a positive influence on his son and successor, Wilhelm II. His reputation was damaged by his alleged treatment of his parents during his father's fatal illness. Misconceived views and inaccurate perceptions sent by his mother to his grandmother, Queen Victoria, painted Wilhelm as cruel and vindictive, fuelling an image that manifested during WWI into propaganda and public perceptions of the bloodthirsty 'Kaiser Bill'.



1914-33

UNFULFILLED PROMISE

When public figures have their lives cut unexpectedly short the focus often falls on only good the things they had, or could have, achieved. Frederick became known for his stoicism in the face of an untimely death. Subsequent eulogies, particularly in Britain, turned him into a mythical hero who would have prevented war. But having fought in three wars, was he really anti-war? If potentially preventing WWI was not enough, for some the stability of his influence over monarchy and state may even have prevented the Weimar Republic and all its consequences, including World War II.

auch Du
Reichswehr

All images: © Alamy

What if...

CHARLES LINDBERGH HAD RUN FOR PRESIDENT?

Could a fascist really have run for the presidency of the United States in 1940 and won?

INTERVIEW WITH

Candace Fleming

Candace Fleming is a bestselling author whose work spans many genres. She has written numerous children's books such as *Boxes For Katie* and *Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!* as well as non-fiction titles including *Presenting Buffalo Bill*. Her latest book, *The Rise And Fall Of Charles Lindbergh*, was published earlier this year.

Who was Charles Lindbergh?

Charles Lindbergh became famous in 1927 when he became the first man to fly across the Atlantic from New York to Paris. Suddenly, out of nowhere dropped this 25-year-old who was an incredibly brave pilot. And he had this crazy idea for getting across the ocean: he stripped all excess weight out of his aeroplane because the less weight the more fuel he could carry. Basically, what remained was a kite. With fuel. It was called the Spirit Of St Louis and he flew it across the Atlantic in 33½ hours. When he landed he became a worldwide hero, particularly in the US.

Folks, especially in the 1920s, were feeling disillusioned about heroes and society as a whole. Now, all of a sudden, here was this wholesome, handsome young man who didn't smoke or drink. Americans saw in him not just a hero, but almost a superman. The kidnap and murder of his two-year-son Charles Jr in 1932 added another layer to the hero. Now, not only was Lindbergh a great American hero who was wholesome, moral and upstanding, but he was now also a tragic figure. Americans love those.

What were his political views like up to 1940?

He had a really good mind but his politics were formed more by experience than academia. He was a staunch eugenicist through the 1930s, and he worked with a man named Dr Alexis Carrel, who wrote a book called *Man The Unknown,* which laid out his extreme views about eugenics, things like: "the white race is drowning in a sea of inferiors" and "only the elite make the progress of the masses possible". It was time with Carrel that worked to form Lindbergh's untrained mind. Lindbergh bought into all Carrel's rot.

They disparaged others who they believed threatened America's "racial strength", such as Russians, Jews, Asians and southern Europeans. Then, in the spring of 1936, Lindbergh had an opportunity to go to Hitler's Germany to take a look at the Luftwaffe. In the few weeks he was there he became infatuated with how efficient and modern it was. He believed Hitler was the best thing that could've happened to Europe, even calling Hitler a "visionary". By 1938, many people in the US and abroad suspected he was pro-Nazi.

What was Lindbergh's stance on World War II?

When he returned to the United States in 1939, he firmly believed Germany was saving Europe. He also saw it as Europe's mess and wanted the United States to stay out of it, with one exception. If the United States was going to join Germany in its fight against the Russians and Japanese (what he deemed "lesser races"), that would have been something he found acceptable. Nowadays, some think of him an isolationist. He wasn't. He was only isolationist in regard to the United States fighting *against* Nazi Germany. If, however, the US joined the war on the side Nazi Germany, that would have been a different thing. And as for the war in the Pacific, he was all

MESSERSCHMITT

RIGHT Lindbergh examining a Messerschmitt fighter at a factory near Munich

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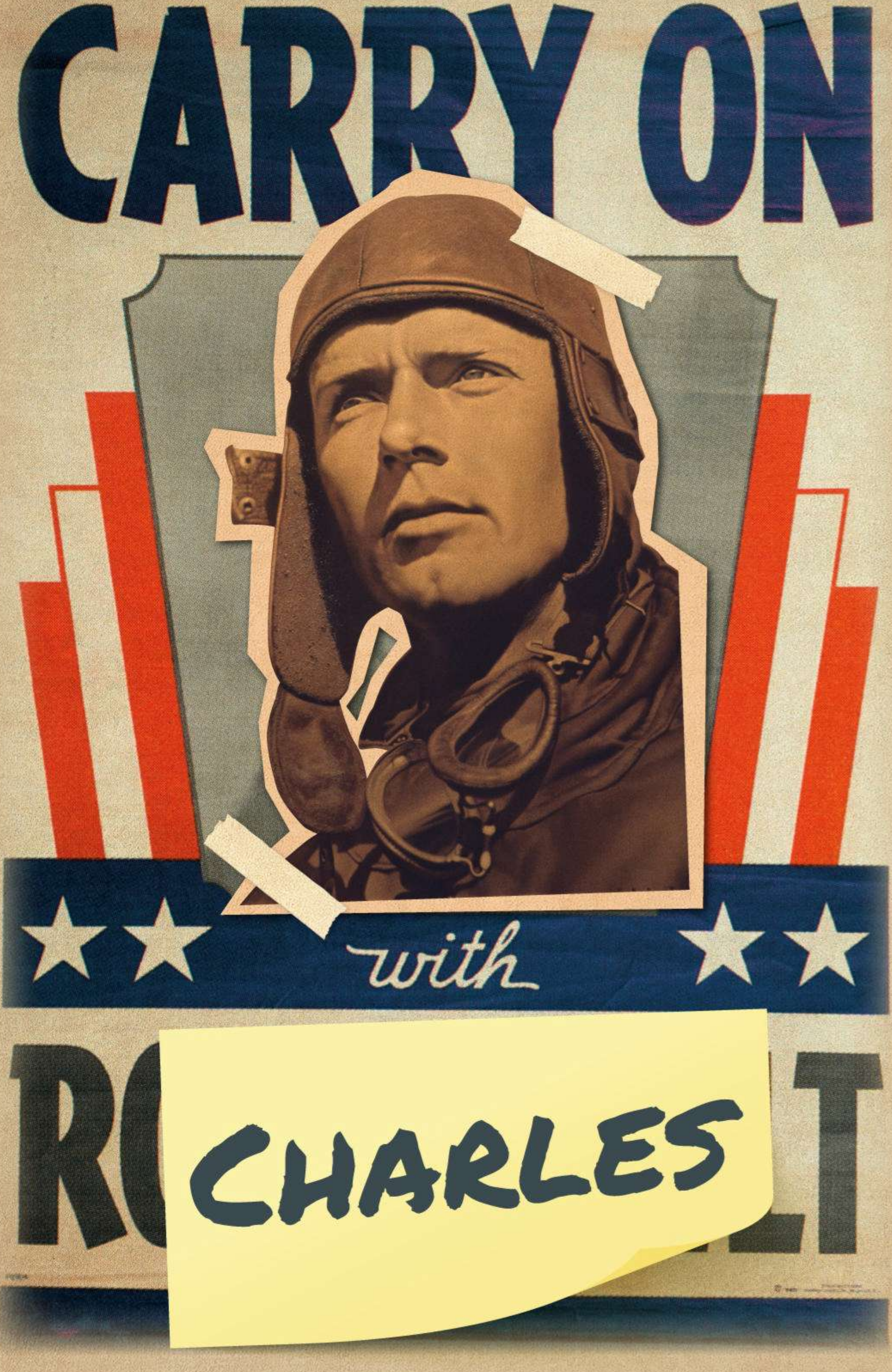
CARRY ON
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RO
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CHARLES

THE PAST

1927

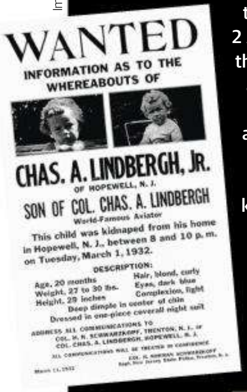
FLIGHT ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

When Lindbergh left college he became a 'barnstormer', a daredevil stunt pilot who would appear at fairs. Joining the US Army Air Corps, he graduated first in his class and became an airmail pilot. Since 1919, a contest to fly across the Atlantic had been arranged by hotel owner Raymond Orteig with a prize of $25,000 to the winner. Opting not to include a parachute and more fuel instead, Lindbergh successfully flew some 3,600 miles in 33½ hours.

1932

LINDBERGH KIDNAPPING

At 9pm on the evening of 1 March 1932, two-year-old Charles Lindbergh Jr was taken from the family home. An hour later his disappearance was discovered and a ransom note for $50,000 was found. A massive police investigation was launched and on 9 March Dr John F Condon (a retired school principal) began to work as a go-between on behalf of the Lindberghs. For months Condon negotiated and delivered payments to the kidnapper until on 2 Apri he was informed that the child could be found on a boat in Massachusetts. The child was not there and on 12 May his partially decomposed body was discovered, having been killed by a blow to the skull two months earlier. The kidnapper would later be caught and executed by electric chair in 1936.



WANTED

INFORMATION AS TO THE WHEREABOUTS OF

CHAS. A. LINDBERGH, JR.

OF HOPEWELL, N. J.

SON OF COL. CHAS. A. LINDBERGH

World-Famous Aviator

This child was kidnaped from his home in Hopewell, N. J., between 8 and 10 p. m. on Tuesday, March 1, 1932.

DESCRIPTION:

Age, 20 months
Weight, 27 to 30 lbs.
Height, 29 inches
Hair, blond, curly
Eyes, dark blue
Complexion, light
Deep dimple in center of chin
Dressed in one-piece coverall night suit

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO
COL. H. N. SCHWARZKOPF, TRENTON, N. J., or
COL. CHAS. A. LINDBERGH, HOPEWELL, N. J.
ALL COMMUNICATIONS WILL BE TREATED IN CONFIDENCE

COL. H. NORMAN SCHWARZKOPF
Supt. New Jersey State Police, Trenton, N. J.

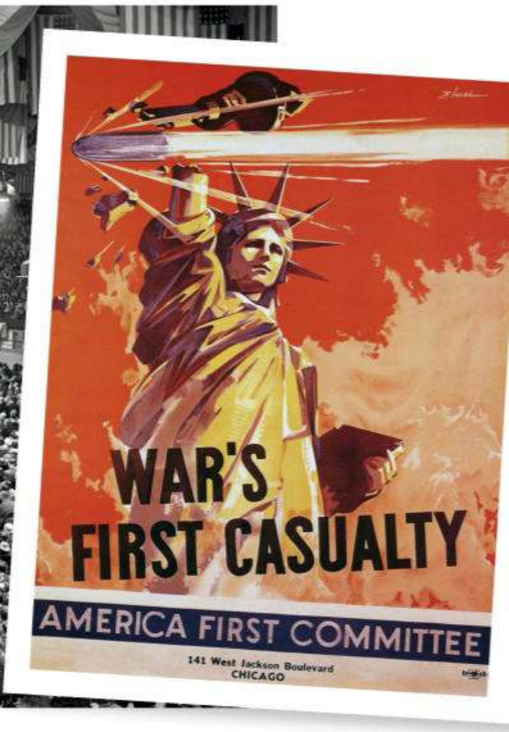
March 11, 1932

Image source: wiki/ SamClayton

1940

ROOSEVELT'S VICTORY

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's decision to seek a third term in office was one of the most important presidential victories in American history. Defying the two-term tradition set by George Washington, Roosevelt ran against the Republican candidate Wendell Willkie, who was opposed to American intervention in the war. Roosevelt won comfortably with 54.8% of the popular vote and 84.5% of the electoral college.



ABOVE-LEFT One of the America First Committee's rallies, attended by about 10,000 people

ABOVE-RIGHT An America First Committee propaganda poster

about that. When America did enter the war in 1941, he was blackballed by the Roosevelt administration. He wasn't allowed to rejoin the Air Corps or enter military service at all. FDR viewed Lindbergh as a Nazi sympathizer and he wasn't allowed to fight. Eventually, he got himself to the South Pacific through other channels and flew against the Japanese. You can see, though, that he was definitely not an isolationist. Sadly, post-war his opinions didn't change. He did a lot of apologizing but he never outright said, "You know, I was wrong about eugenics. I was wrong about Hitler. My political stance was not grounded in fact." Instead, Lindbergh didn't quite understand why people were so angry about his views.

Who were the America First Committee?

America First was formed by a group of college students. They were isolationists who truly did not want to repeat of World War I. It grew rapidly and became a popular national organisation with thousands of members. America First was made up of Americans from all walks of life who wanted to keep the US out of the war in both Europe and the Pacific. But as time passed, many Americans began to see the gravity of the situation in Europe. They moved away from America First and began supporting FDR's efforts to provide Britain with the war materials she needed to defend herself from the Germans. The vacuum left by their departure was quickly filled by racists, eugenicists, Nazi sympathizers and anti-Semites. This is when Lindbergh became the face of America First. By 1940 he'd become louder and more strident about not fighting Germany. The things that came out of his mouth were virulently anti-Semitic. He accused American Jews of forcing America into a war. He called them "others" and implied that they weren't real Americans. Wonderfully, Americans didn't stand for it. In 1941, he gave a particularly anti-Semitic speech in Des Moines, Iowa. Millions of people listened in on the radio and the next morning Americans turned on him. Men stood up in Congress and called it the most anti-American talk they'd ever heard, and newspapers called him out on their front pages. He really got publicly smacked around. Three months later, Pearl Harbor was attacked and the United States entered the war. America First was disbanded and Lindbergh disappeared from the public stage – at least for a while.

What do you think a 1940 Lindbergh presidential campaign could have looked like?

It would have been big, loud and nationalistic. He would've flown himself to his rallies because people would've loved that, and those rallies would have been big and wild, maybe a little violent. They would have been broadcast coast-to-coast on the radio so he would have reached a wide audience. What would he have stood for? Policy-wise, he would have advocated no war with Germany, but definitely with Japan. He would have promised voters a more friendly relationship with Nazi Germany. In his published journals Lindbergh writes about making way for white men and reserving nations solely for white men, so I'm sure his campaign would have reflected this. He probably would've used America First as a slogan, but changed its meaning. In Lindbergh's campaign, American First would have meant white America first, and my guess is he'd have promised policies to back up the slogan. What kind of policies? Stopping immigration into the country, building a wall along the borders (he actually did advocate this, calling them "ramparts"), building up the military, curtailing the freedom of the press, and the voluntary sterilisation of those deemed 'genetically unfit'.

> "There's no way a President Lindbergh would have provided war aid to Britain"

Could he have won in 1940?
Americans were becoming a little less isolationist at this point. But Lindbergh was so popular – a great American hero and a superstar celebrity – and Americans love 'celebrities'. We tend to elect them without much regard for their knowledge, experience or ability. FDR, of course, was popular too, but not as popular as he had been in previous elections. Lindbergh would have been a formidable opponent. I think there's a very good chance he could have won the presidency.

BELOW
Lindbergh (centre) gives a 'Bellamy salute' to the American flag

BOTTOM
Lindbergh is entertained by Hermann Goering during his visit to Nazi Germany

5x © Getty Images

What would have been the impact of Lindbergh as president?
His policies would definitely have kept America out of war in Europe, and they would have been policies that did not help Britain. If Britain had been left unaided, I think Germany would have eventually taken her. No way would a President Lindbergh have provided any sort of aid to Britain – no materials, ships or arms. Certainly not man power. He saw Britain as part of the problem and even blamed it in his America First speeches for causing the war. So he definitely would not have created policies, as FDR did, to help Britain. In fact, I think he would have formed policies that aided Germany, perhaps even that formed a trade alliance between Germany and the United States.

As for American Jews, I don't know. He blamed Jews for causing the problems but he did not agree with the Nazis' approach. So I don't think he would have rounded up America's Jews. Still, I doubt he would have done anything to help Europe's Jews. He would have stated that what happens in Germany is their business. A President Lindbergh could have changed the course of history in a really big way. Britain would have lost the war and Germany would've been America's economic ally. And in the United States, fascism would have taken hold. Remember, Lindbergh thought Hitler was a visionary and his wife Anne called fascism "the wave of the future". I think he would've imported some of those things he found impressive about Nazi Germany to the United States. Number-one, there would have been no free press under a Lindbergh presidency. He believed that the press sowed chaos and didn't tell the truth. He would have locked the press down and he would have clamped down on protesters too because he believed they sowed chaos. If there was one thing that Lindbergh loved about Germany it was its efficiency, regimentation and discipline. So those are all things I know for sure he would have attempted to implement had he become president.

THE POSSIBILITY

1941

LEND-LEASE

As well as not joining the war, it's highly unlikely that had Lindbergh run for and won the presidency in 1940 that the Lend-Lease programme or something similar would have been instigated. Following Roosevelt's victory, in 1941 Winston Churchill appealed directly to the president requesting support, which initially led to the USA providing 50 navy destroyers in return for 99-year leases on British bases in the Caribbean and Newfoundland. However, soon more support was requested and so Roosevelt designed a programme that allowed the United States to lend or lease war supplies to any nation deemed to be "vital to the defence of the United States". Certainly, this programme would not have developed under Lindbergh and it's doubtful how long Britain would have been able to hold off Nazi Germany without this or other support.

1942

NO MORE FREE PRESS?

Lindbergh had a mixed relationship with the media. Initially, it was responsible for making him a worldwide sensation but following the death of his son at the hands of a kidnapper, the resulting media circus had a lasting impact. The perpetrator's attorney was paid for by media baron William Randolph Hearst's papers in return for exclusive story rights, and people even sold miniature souvenir 'Lindbergh Ladders', mimicking the one that was used during the kidnapping. This led to a deep loathing for the media within Lindbergh, and a more controlled media must have appealed to him.

1945

AMERICA FIRST

The America First Committee disbanded only three days after Pearl Harbor. In recent years, the phrase 'America First' has taken on a new meaning and has even been used by Donald Trump. Had the organisation continued it's impossible to say how we would view that phrase today.

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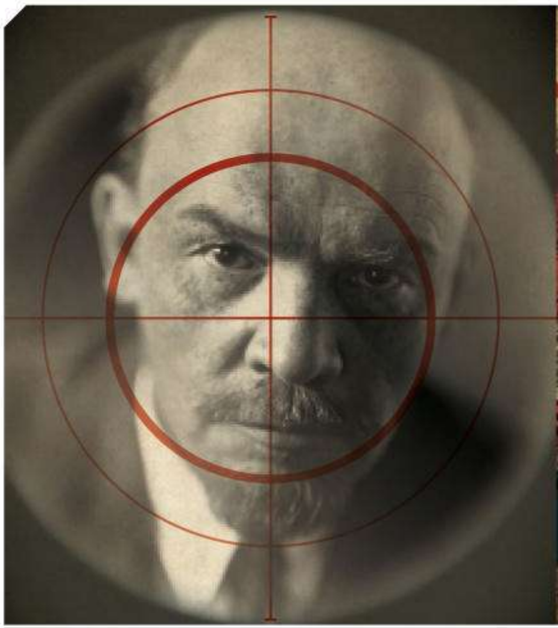

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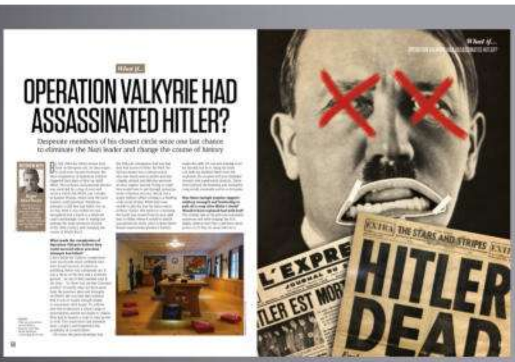

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